



# Rooted

IN HIS WORD



May



# FOUNDATION

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# Rooted In His Word: Foundation

## Malachi 3 – Bring the Tithe Sunday

May 2, 2021

### FOR THE LEADER

Over the last five years we have set aside the first Sunday in May to study giving during our Sunday school hours. Today we continue that annual trend as we look at the Biblical principle of tithing. Now before we fold our arms and sink down in our seats because we are discussing money let's keep a few things in mind. There are over 2000 scripture verses pertaining to money and giving in the Bible. That means God thought it was pretty important and wanted His creation to understand the significance of giving and how giving relates to our love relationship with Him.

**MAIN GOAL:** When we truly love God, we are obedient to Him and His word even when it relates to money.

In our lesson today we will concentrate on the word TRUST. To be faithful stewards of what God has blessed us with we have to have trust in the Lord and His Word. We will use the word **T.R.U.S.T.** as an acrostic to teach us how we can live well and prosper.

### I. INTRODUCTION

Do you believe the Bible whole heartedly when we read promises given to us by God?

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We should always believe when the Bible reveals to us a promise. When God speaks through His word, He is showing us His love is real. God may or may not understand our skepticism and struggles in following all of His plans and expectations for us. This is especially true when it comes to giving. God has many expectations for all believers, one of them being to give, *"By bringing the full tithe into the storehouse."*

Malachi 3:10 gives us two commands and two pending results when we adhere to what God wants from His people.

What is the first command given to God's people in Malachi 3:10? What are we told to do?

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“Bring the full tithe into the storehouse” is the first command given to us by God. What does that mean?

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What is the result or promise of God’s people being faithful by giving?

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Based on Malachi 3:10, when God’s people give what happens? What is the result?

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What is the second command given to God’s people? (Malachi 3:10b *“And thereby put me to the test, says the LORD of hosts...”*)

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What is the second result to the command to test Him? (Malachi 3:10b *“...if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.”*)

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He has issued us an invitation to test Him on this promise. When God’s people test the Father in giving, God promises to pour out His blessings on His people in a powerful way.

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## II. GET FOCUSED

Testing begins with TRUSTING! In the last book of the Old Testament, God says through the prophet Malachi: “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this....”

God promises that if we will be faithful to honor Him with the whole tithe, He will pour out so many blessings on us that we will run out of room to contain all of them! He may also bless you by preventing things in your life that devour your resources. God tests us plenty of times; however, this is the only place in the Bible where God invites us to TEST Him.

**ILLUSTRATION: Dollar Bill**

If you had a one-dollar bill, then a tithe would be ten cents. Some people think the tithe belongs to the Lord and the 90% belongs to us, pretty good deal, huh? Actually, 100% of it belongs to God and we tithe to acknowledge that it all belongs to Him. We are allowed to manage it for Him, and we must be wise stewards.

**ILLUSTRATION: The Doctor and Tithing! (This is a true story.)**

A doctor from a church was teaching Sunday school to his class of young married couples. He spoke on tithing and the Biblical importance of it. After the lesson, a man named Bob approached him and told the Doctor how badly he wished he could tithe, he just knew with all his bills he couldn't afford it. The doctor went home that day and talked to his wife. They came up with a plan and the next week he stood in front of his class and told them about the conversation he had the week before, without using Bob's name. He told them he and his wife felt tithing was too important and if anyone in the class tithed and at the end of the month, they were short to pay bills he would make up the difference. Several couples began to faithfully give based on the Doctor's promise. It's been over 30 years that he's issued this challenge to his class, and the Doctor has never had to pay a bill yet. God always provides.

It's great they found obedience in giving; however, it's a shame they trusted the money of a doctor rather than the Author of Life. They may have found obedience in giving, but it was only because they had safety a net just in case something went wrong. In Malachi we are told God will provide and God will multiply. We have to stop trusting the promises of man and begin trusting the promises in God's word.

Be honest, would the promise of this Doctor have changed your mind on tithing? Why or Why not? If someone in this class promised you the same thing would you start tithing?

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Does the promise in Malachi 3:10 change your mind on tithing?

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We started today by saying giving and tithing are a direct result of our **T.R.U.S.T.** in God. Do we **T.R.U.S.T.** God with our money?

**Read Proverbs 3:5-6**

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*

## Take an Inventory of Your Faithfulness in Giving

**ILLUSTRATION:** During January, many small business retail store owners temporarily close their doors to customers while they spend time taking inventory. In other words, they examine and make a record of their assets. Stores will look back on their sales from the past year to see what worked and what didn't work.

For a few moments, I'd like to ask you to be a small retail business owner and shut your mind to any outside distractions and look within to see what is really inside your heart. Look at verse 5 again: Do you really trust God? Do you trust Him with all your heart, or is it more of a half-hearted dependence? Do you live life according to what God says in His Word or do you depend upon your own understanding? In other words, have you made a decision to fully trust God faithfully in every circumstance and in **ALL THINGS**, or do you have to have it all figured out for yourself?

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Do you acknowledge God in everything you do?

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"Trust the Lord completely, acknowledge Him for direction." Read that again. Are those two things hard? Are they mutually exclusive or do they go hand-in-hand?

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What are some ways you currently "Trust the Lord completely, and acknowledge Him for direction?" (Teachers: make some notes here to use concerning your own personal testimony).

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This verse can be difficult for us to apply to our lives, especially in the area of money and finances. Do you want to see a practical way to know for sure if you're trusting God? Look with me in verse nine. "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first-fruits of all your crops." (Proverbs 3:9) The best place to begin your trust inventory is to look and see how you are handling your money and your possessions in relation to God.

If you are honoring God with what He has entrusted to you, then your faithfulness is visible. As you take this trust inventory, a good place to start would be to look back at last year's expenditures and your monthly bank statements. Because according to this passage of God's Word, how you use the resources He has provided for you is a key indicator of your spiritual trust level.

Do you believe that? Do you believe faithfulness and obedience to God includes what we do with our money? Why or why not?

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Based on these verses, what should our obedience to God with our finances look like?

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### YOUR VIEWPOINT:

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## Recognize God as Our Provider

### Proverbs 3:5-6

*Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*

People are always wondering what's going to happen to the economy. We wonder if the stock market will go up or down in 2021. Now I don't have real answers to that question, but I can just about guarantee you some days it will go up and some days it will go down.

Here is the key principle of how God sees the economy: **GOD IS THE SOURCE OF ALL YOUR WEALTH AND ALL OF YOUR MONEY!**

Wealth is not found in your job, nor your investments. It's not found in the size house you have or the model and make of the car you drive. The true source of **ALL** wealth is God.

Some of you may disagree here because you think you trained, and worked, and prepared, and you earned everything you possess. Who do you think gave you the ability to work and earn? Here's the bottom line for your bottom line:

### Read Deuteronomy 8:16-18

*He gave you manna to eat in the desert, something your fathers had never known, to humble and to test you so that in the end it might go well with you. <sup>17</sup>You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me." <sup>18</sup>But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your forefathers, as it is today.*

Your income is a lot like the manna of the Old Testament. When Moses was leading the Israelites, there was no food in the desert so every morning (except the Sabbath) when the Jews woke up there was manna on the ground. The Bible says manna was round and white and sweet. I'm picturing a funnel cake under a mound of powdered sugar.

God provided it, and all they had to do was to go out and collect it. But they could only collect enough for that very day; if they tried to hoard it and store it—it spoiled. Every financial resource you have is like that. In the New Testament **James 1:17** says, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows."

If we claim James 1:17 as our own then the cars we drive, the food we eat, the homes we live in, our 401Ks, and the income we earn is from above. We **CANNOT** say, "I made this myself, or I built this myself."

### **Read Deuteronomy 8:1-3**

*Be careful to follow every command I am giving you today, so that you may live and increase and may enter and possess the land the Lord promised on oath to your ancestors. <sup>2</sup>Remember how the Lord your God led you all the way in the wilderness these forty years, to humble and test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands. <sup>3</sup>He humbled you, causing you to hunger and then feeding you with manna, which neither you nor your ancestors had known, to teach you that man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.*

Deuteronomy 8 clearly explains that God provided manna for two reasons:

- (1) To HUMBLE them—they couldn't brag about creating it.
- (2) To TEST them—to see if they would acknowledge God was the source.

### **Two questions today: Are you humbled? Are you passing God's test?**

What are some ways you have been humbled or tested by God in your finances?

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### **YOUR VIEWPOINT**

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## **Use Your Income to Honor God**

### **Read Proverbs 3:9**

*Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first-fruits of all your crops.*

How do you honor God with your income?

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First, you acknowledge He is your source, and then you give Him your first fruits. Of course, when this was written, grain, grapes, wine and livestock were traded just like we use money. When a farmer harvested his crop, he would give 10% of his produce to the priests at the Temple. He would give the first and the best. Whenever you hear the word "tithe," it means one-tenth or 10%. Sometimes a person will say, "I tithe 5% of my income to the Lord." That's a misuse of the word. "Tithe" means exactly 10%. Tithe means 10% like "quarter" means 25% or "half" means 50%. However, Biblical tithing is more than giving God 10%—it means trusting God enough by giving Him the first 10%. The Bible says, "Honor the Lord with your first fruits"—not your leftovers.

**ILLUSTRATION: Paul Harvey – Frozen Turkey Question**

Paul Harvey tells the true story that illustrates the tendency we have to give God our leftovers. The Butterball Turkey Company set up a consumer hotline to answer questions. One woman called to ask about cooking a turkey she had kept in her freezer for 23 years. The operator told her it might be safe if the freezer had been kept below zero degrees the entire time. But the operator warned the woman that, even if it were safe, the flavor had probably deteriorated, and she wouldn't recommend eating it. The caller replied, "That's exactly what we thought. We'll just go ahead and give it to the church."

Would we really do that? Would we give the church and God our leftovers?

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God deserves first our TRUST and our TREASURE—not our old TURKEYS. Tithing is the starting point for Biblical stewardship. A lot of people don't tithe because they give God the leftovers instead of the first fruits. If you wait until after you pay the power bill, the gas bill, or the house payment before you give to God—it will be very hard for you to tithe—you're using leftovers!

How do you currently show God your faithfulness in giving? *(Teachers, this is a great place to give a personal story of how your faithfulness in giving has impacted your life.)*

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**YOUR VIEWPOINT**

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**Show Obedience in Giving to God’s Church**

*“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding.”*

**Read John 3:16**

*For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.*

We don’t give to God because He commands us to, although He does command it. We give to God to show we love Him. We Trust HIM. When you LOVE and TRUST you always give. The Bible says, “God so loved the world that He gave ...” You can give without loving, but you cannot love without giving. Love is always expensive. When you love someone, you don’t stop to ask how much it’s going to cost.

Do you believe that tithing to the church shows your obedience to God?

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**YOUR VIEWPOINT**

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**Trust Him with Your Treasure**

**Read Matthew 6:21**

*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

Where your TREASURE is dedicated, your HEART will be committed. Your heart will follow where you put your treasure—so devote your money where you want your heart to be! Giving is an overflow of the heart. Giving is a privilege and an honor.

**Read Matthew 6:33**

*But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you.*

How are you currently showing God trust with your treasure?

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**YOUR VIEWPOINT**

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### III. CONCLUSION

The key question is not "Can I afford to sacrificially give?" but rather, "Do I trust God, FULLY and COMPLETELY?" You've got to answer that for yourself. If you say, "Yes" then the next question is simply:

Will I now begin to trust God with my money? Why or why not?

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Dr. Shadrack Meshack Lockeridge is one of the greatest African American preachers of our day. In 1976 he preached a sermon on trusting God. This is a portion of the sermon.

*"God is greater than all the superlative statements of supremacy ever shared. No far-reaching telescope can bring into focus the shoreline of his unlimited supply. No deep digging dredge can discover the depth of His determination to deliver you—You can trust Him!*

*He doesn't need me and He doesn't need you. He stands alone on the solitary pinnacle of His omnipotence. He is enduringly strong; and He is entirely sincere; He is eternally steadfast; and He is impartially merciful. He is unparalleled and unprecedented; He is unique and unescapable. He is the cornerstone of all civilization; He is the central doctrine of all truth—He is God's Son, our Savior and you can trust Him!*

*He can meet all your needs and He can do it simultaneously. He gives you hope when you're hopeless; Help when you're helpless; peace when you're in pain; strength when you struggle; rest when you're restless; and courage when you cry. He sees and He sympathizes; He guards and He guides. He heals the sick; cleanses the leper; sets the captives free; and forgives sinners. I'm telling you, Church, you can trust Him!*

*He is the key to knowledge; the wellspring of wisdom; the doorway of deliverance; and He's the pathway of peace. He's the roadway to righteousness; the highway to holiness; and He's the gateway to glory—and you can trust Him! He's the master of the masters; the captain of the conquerors, the head of the heroes and the leader of the legislators. He's the governor of governors, the prince of the princes, He's the Lord of all Lords and He's the king of all Kings and you CAN trust Him.*

*I wish I could describe Him to you—but He's indescribable, He's irresistible, He's irreplaceable, He's indisputable, He's invincible! His Word is all you need, and His love never ends. His grace is sufficient and His mercy never fails; His yoke is easy and His burden is light. I tell you, you can't outlive Him and you can't live without Him. Pilate couldn't stop Him; Herod couldn't kill Him; death couldn't handle Him; and, praise God, the grave couldn't hold Him! He's alive forevermore and forevermore you can trust Him!"*

The question is, "Do we trust Him enough to let Him have our treasure?"

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## **IV. EXTRA TIME**

Money always brings up an uneasiness in conversation. We have seen how the Bible points us to give our full tithe to the storehouse. The tithe is 10% and goes to the church to support the local and global ministry of the church. Anything given above the 10% is called an offering. The offering is money given to support the church or it may support another parachurch ministry that is spreading the gospel.

How would you encourage someone to start "bringing the full tithe into the storehouse?"

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Is it important to start somewhere even if it's not the full tithe?

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## **V. PRAYER**

Pray for God to lead you and your class to be obedient to Him in everything including giving.

## **VI. MEMORY VERSE**

Malachi 3:10

# Rooted In His Word: Foundation

## Matthew 7:24-29 - House on a Rock

May 9, 2021

### FOR THE LEADER

Have you ever built a house? Once the plans are made and the blueprint is designed, the most important feature isn't the size of the kitchen or the number of bathrooms. The most important aspect of any house is the foundation. Without the foundation, it doesn't matter what color the walls are painted or where the light fixtures are hung. All that matters for the security and safety of your home is the strength of your foundation. In our lesson today we will be looking at two builders, two houses, and two foundations which led to two different outcomes. Everything in life is based on the choices we make. The decisions we make tell God, our family, our friends, our neighbors, and even perfect strangers how important our faith is to us. It's easy to say, "Every choice we make should come from our faith in Christ and be guided by the Holy Spirit." It's hard to put that practice into action.

**MAIN GOAL:** As believers we are responsible for our own personal foundation in Christ.

#### TODAY'S TRUTHS:

**TRUTH #1:** If what we say and what we do don't match, our testimony is useless.

**TRUTH #2:** Our testimony can withstand the storms of life when our foundation is the solid rock of Christ.

**TRUTH #3:** By confessing Jesus, we are building our foundation to withstand all that comes against it.

From our passage today we will see a wise man and a foolish man. Most of us can identify with these two builders in one way or another. Every single day we make decisions that impact our foundation as a Christian. Sometimes we make decisions that strengthen our foundation, while other times we make decisions that weaken it. Keep in mind in both situations it is our own individual choice.

## I. INTRODUCTION

J C Ryle comments that what we have here is "a striking picture of two classes of Christian hearers. Those who hear and do nothing--and those who hear and do--are both placed before us, and their histories traced to their respective ends. The man who hears Christian teaching, and practices what he hears, is like 'a wise man who built his house on a rock.'" The man with a strong foundation does not satisfy himself with listening to exhortations to repent, believe in Christ, and live a holy life. Instead, "He actually repents. he believes, and he ceases to do evil. He learns to do well, abhors that which is sinful, and cleaves to that which is good. He is a doer as well as a hearer."

**Read Matthew 7:24-27**

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup>And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup>And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup>And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.

**Read James 1:22-24**

But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. <sup>23</sup>For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. <sup>24</sup>For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like.

How do these two passages mirror one another?

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Why is it important for our words and our actions to match?

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What happens when our words and actions as believers don't line-up and match?

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## II. GET FOCUSED

### TRUTH #1: IF WHAT WE SAY AND WHAT WE DO DON'T MATCH, OUR TESTIMONY IS USELESS.

#### Look at Matthew 7:24-27 again

*"Everyone then who hears these words of mine..."*

It's important for us to recognize these words are from Jesus. Beginning in verse 24 he tells the people who hear these words to build their house on the rock. The beginning of the verse points us back to the words he has just spoken, "Everyone then who hears these words..." We know these words as the sermon on the mount. For us to grasp the "how we are to build" we are told to look back and build our lives, our homes, and all our relationships on the teachings Jesus has given us.

In the two chapters prior, chapters 5 & 6, we are taught by Jesus His expectations for living. Jesus teaches us to "go the extra mile" through His teachings known as the Be-attitudes. He calls us to be the salt and light of the world. He teaches us why He came. He taught us about anger, lust, divorce, and we should love our enemies. Jesus then taught on giving to the needy, fasting, judging others, the golden rule, and storing treasures in heaven. All these things are important and yet one of the greatest teachings He gave was on prayer. In verses 5-13 of Matthew chapter six, Jesus teaches us how to pray.

### Read Matthew 6:5-13

*And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites. For they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by others. Truly, I say to you, they have received their reward. <sup>6</sup>But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret. And your Father who sees in secret will reward you. <sup>7</sup>And when you pray, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do, for they think that they will be heard for their many words. <sup>8</sup>Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. <sup>9</sup>Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. <sup>10</sup>Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. <sup>11</sup>Give us this day our daily bread, <sup>12</sup>and forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. <sup>13</sup>And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.*

Why is understanding Jesus' teaching on prayer so important for us in living our daily testimony in front of others?

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How does prayer help us to build our lives "on the rock," Jesus told us to build on?

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For us to build our lives on the rock and foundation of Christ we must be willing to follow all the instructions found in Matthew 5-7. Jesus makes it clear how important his words were prior to Matthew 7:24 by telling us to not only hear the words but to put them into practice. In this passage, Jesus emphasizes a critical aspect in the relationship between God and his creation. All believers have the right and the ability to make a personal choice. We get to choose whether we want to walk with God or not. It's a choice we all get to make and genuine, not artificial, obedience to His Word is required. Here is the choice for us to consider today, be wise and build on a solid foundation, or be foolish and build on sand. Hearing the word and even approving of it, is not enough unless it is accompanied by obedience.

Looking back at this passage the word "Everyone" leaves no middle ground or room for exceptions. The expression literally means "**ALL.**" In other words, we **ALL** build our lives as either a wise or foolish builder. We are either building on a solid, firm foundation of Christ or on a weak foundation of sand.

List some things that help you build your life on a solid, firm foundation.

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List things which will cause you to build your life on a weak foundation.

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God calls us to not only hear his words, but also to follow them. The comparison is that of a builder who builds his house on the rock. The foundation of a home will determine how well it will handle storms and the daily elements. For believers, the foundation they build on will determine how well they handle the storms and elements of everyday life. Scripture shows us two distinct builders. One is called a wise builder, the other is identified as a foolish builder.

The wise builder, Jesus explains is a wise person who puts His words into practice, proving that faith in Christ's finished work on the cross is honest and genuine. The foolish builder, on the other hand, professes or pretends to have faith when there is no real relationship with God. Some may merely have an intellectual commitment to following Christ. Their foundation is weak and doesn't fool the Lord our God.

## YOUR VIEWPOINT

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## TRUTH #2: OUR TESTIMONY CAN WITHSTAND THE STORMS OF LIFE WHEN OUR FOUNDATION IS THE SOLID ROCK OF CHRIST.

### Read Matthew 7:25

*And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.*

What are your thoughts on the analogy of the rain, floods, and wind?

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When we have a solid foundation what happens when difficult storms emerge?

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What have you encountered in your life that tested your foundation?

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### Read Matthew 7:26-27

*And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup>And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.*

Again, Jesus points the people back to His words he had already spoken from the mountain. He tells them once again how important it is to be not only a hearer of His words, but also a doer of what He has said.

What does scripture say happens when God's people hear the words of Christ but don't put them into action?

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### YOUR VIEWPOINT

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## TRUTH #3: BY CONFESSING JESUS, WE ARE BUILDING OUR FOUNDATION TO WITHSTAND ALL THAT COMES AGAINST IT.

### Read Matthew 16:13-19

*Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" <sup>14</sup>And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup>He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup>Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup>And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup>I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

Jesus brought his disciples to Caesarea Philippi. What transpired there was a life-changing, history-altering moment. Jesus asks his disciples, "Who do people say I am?" They had a natural response. "John the Baptist," "Elijah," "One of the prophets." To this point it seemed like a regular conversation, but then Jesus changed the narrative. Jesus asked, "But who do you say that I am?"

When Jesus asked His question, He was setting the stage for a huge transitional shift that was to come. We may gloss over the question, but the question is so personal and so private, the corporate response by Peter, answering for all of them, is fascinating. Peter gives a plural response, "You are the Christ, son of the living God."

Jesus then states, "And I tell you that you are Peter and upon this rock I will build my church."

What is the rock to which Jesus is referring?

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Jesus was referring to Peter's confession. The rock is our confession that Jesus is the Christ. Until we are willing to confess that Jesus is Lord over all, we will not have a strong foundation. By confessing Jesus as Savior, by making Him Lord we are building a strong foundation able to withstand the schemes of the devil. Let me be clear, Jesus doesn't say the church will be built by men alone or confession alone. Jesus is saying, his church shall be built by men, women, boys, and girls confessing He is the Christ.

How have you recently confessed Jesus as Lord publicly?

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What happens to our foundation when we don't confess Jesus as Lord?

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How was this moment a life-changing, history-altering moment?

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The followers of Jesus now knew their role going forward. They could no longer wonder what they were doing there, or where they were going as followers of Jesus. Now they knew. They would be the catalyst for the foundation of the church.

**YOUR VIEWPOINT**

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### III. CONCLUSION

So many songs we sing in church or hear on the radio deal with our foundation in Christ. One of my favorite hymns is "The Solid Rock." I love the words found in the third verse, "His oath, His covenant, His blood, support me in the whelming flood. When All around my soul gives way, he then is all my hope and stay."

When life is overwhelming and it feels like the walls are closing in, remember the covenant He made, His promise and the blood He shed for us. When our foundation gets weak, remember to confess Christ, for with every confession comes strength for our foundation.

#### Read Matthew 7:26-29

*"And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup>And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." <sup>28</sup>And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, <sup>29</sup>for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.*

Sand is a weak substance for a foundation. Recently, my wife and I did a DIY project. We built a short walkway off our back patio. We went online and followed instructions in a YouTube video. We were amazed at what happened when we placed the walking stones into the sand and poured small river rock around it. The walking stones in sand alone would move and were unstable. When we packed the rock around them though, the walking stones were solid, didn't move and you felt safe walking on them.

What does Jesus say happens when we have a foundation made of sand?

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What do you need to do today to strengthen your foundation?

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Without our confession of Jesus as Lord, our personal foundation and the foundation of the church will be compromised. A compromised foundation cannot and will not withstand the schemes of the devil. Begin today confessing Jesus as Lord every single day.

#### YOUR VIEWPOINT

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## **IV. EXTRA TIME**

As we have already seen and discussed in the previous chapters and verses known as the Be-attitudes, Jesus gives us a laundry list of things that will test our foundation. What happens to our foundation when we come face-to-face with divorce, lust, anxiousness, etc.?

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## **V. PRAYER**

- Repent and seek God's restoration.
- Pray for friends, neighbors, family and colleagues who have a shaky, weak foundation.

## **VI. MEMORY VERSE**

Matthew 6:33

# Rooted In His Word: Foundation

## Matthew 16:13-20 – Peter’s Confession

May 16, 2021

### FOR THE LEADER

In today’s lesson, we will journey with Jesus and His disciples to Caesarea Philippi, located about 120 miles from Jerusalem in northern Palestine. This area was known as Gentile territory and the region was strongly identified as having numerous religions. The area had been a central hub for Baal worship, and Herod the Great built a temple there to honor Augustus Caesar, just to name a few of the pagan worship activities transpiring in the region. Peter’s confession, we know so well, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,” was made “in the midst” of the pagan hypocrisy found throughout the region.

**MAIN GOAL:** Confessing Christ is a personal decision based on God revealing Himself to mankind.

In order for us to understand the main truth we need to answer four questions:

- What made Peter’s confession so unique and important in scripture?
- How did Peter reach this incredible confession?
- What was the result of Peter’s confession?
- Why did Jesus warn the disciples not to tell anyone?

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Read Matthew 16:13-20

*Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” <sup>14</sup>And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” <sup>15</sup>He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” <sup>16</sup>Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” <sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup>And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. <sup>19</sup>I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.” <sup>20</sup>Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ.*

There’s more in this passage than we can possibly deal with in one week but today we are going to try. In our focal verses, we find a rare occasion--one of only two in the New Testament--in which our Savior spoke of the church that He promised to build. It’s hard to believe Jesus only mentions the church twice in recorded scripture, the church that He shed His own precious blood to redeem. One could argue, this is one of the most crucial passages in the Gospel of Matthew. It is a passage much of the teachings in this Gospel have been leading to. It is truly one of the great passages in the Bible.

Greg Allen, a Bible teacher and scholar writes of this passage, "It used to be that most Christians within the protestant tradition were well-taught in one of the great "confessions of faith". There have been many great ones. If you were raised with a Dutch Calvinist background, for example, you would have been taught the Heidelberg Confession. If you are from a Presbyterian background, you would have learned the Westminster Confession of Faith. Many Congregationalists learned the Savoy Declaration of Faith and Order; and many Baptists learned the Philadelphia Confession of Faith. And of course, for many centuries Christians all around the world recited 'the Apostolic Creed...' I ask that we look at the greatest "confession" of them all. This confession is the confession upon which all others absolutely must be based. In fact, I would go so far as to say that it is the one confession--above all others--that is essential to believe in order to be saved."

Why is Peter's confession of Christ so important and essential for believers?

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Peter's confession, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," is paramount to accepting Jesus' place in our lives. Without this confession, we are not placing Christ as the true leader of our lives. Understanding what it means for a person to be saved begins with, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

## YOUR VIEWPOINT

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## II. GET FOCUSED

**Question to be Answered: What made Peter's confession so unique and important in scripture?**

**Answer:** Peter's confession was not the first recorded confession of faith in Christ found in scripture, but it was the first confession Jesus asked for.

Jesus was the one who asked the question of the disciples and He was clearly trying to discover what others and the disciples felt and knew about Him. Other people who encountered Jesus had confessed faith in Him. Let's look at a few.

### Read John 1:43-49

*The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Follow me." <sup>44</sup>Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. <sup>45</sup>Philip found Nathanael and said to him, "We have found him of whom Moses in the Law and also the prophets wrote, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." <sup>46</sup>Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see." <sup>47</sup>Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!" <sup>48</sup>Nathanael said to him, "How do you know me?" Jesus answered him, "Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you." <sup>49</sup>Nathanael answered him, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!"*

How did Nathanael confess Christ?

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**Read Matthew 14:22-33**

*Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. <sup>23</sup>And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, <sup>24</sup>but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. <sup>25</sup>And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. <sup>26</sup>But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear. <sup>27</sup>But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." <sup>28</sup>And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." <sup>29</sup>He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. <sup>30</sup>But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." <sup>31</sup>Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" <sup>32</sup>And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. <sup>33</sup>And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."*

How did the disciples confess Christ after witnessing Peter walk on water?

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**Read John 1:35-41**

*The next day again John was standing with two of his disciples, <sup>36</sup>and he looked at Jesus as he walked by and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God!" <sup>37</sup>The two disciples heard him say this, and they followed Jesus. <sup>38</sup>Jesus turned and saw them following and said to them, "What are you seeking?" And they said to him, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" <sup>39</sup>He said to them, "Come and you will see." So they came and saw where he was staying, and they stayed with him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. <sup>40</sup>One of the two who heard John speak and followed Jesus[b] was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. <sup>41</sup>He first found his own brother Simon and said to him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means Christ).*

How did Andrew confess Christ to his brother Simon?

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In each of these situations the person or persons confessed Christ after they experienced something miraculous or amazing. Nathanael was in awe because Jesus knew him and told him He had noticed him while he was sitting under a tree. For the disciples it was Jesus performing a miracle by calling Peter out on the water. For Andrew he was a follower of John the Baptist who had taught of the incredible things "the one who comes after him" would do.

**Question to be Answered: How did Peter reach this incredible confession?**

**Answer:** God had revealed it to him through a special revelation.

**Read Matthew 16:13-17 again**

*Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" <sup>14</sup>And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." <sup>15</sup>He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" <sup>16</sup>Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup>And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.*

After Jesus asks his disciples, "who do others say I am?," He then gets personal with them and asks, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter boldly responds, "You are the Christ, Son of the living God."

Peter's response is genuine and humble. Peter was not being emotive; he wasn't speaking from an emotional high he had experienced as a disciple. Peter's statement was a sincere word given and revealed to him by the Father.

Read v. 17 again, why does Jesus call Peter blessed?

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Peter's confession was a revelation given to him by God, not by man. Jesus was clearly saying, Peter you are blessed for you have experienced a clear revelation from God. By saying, "You are the Christ," Peter was acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah, or anointed one.

Have you ever experienced a clear revelation from God? When? What happened?

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Why is this revelation, given by God to Peter, so important to the church even today?

**Question to be answered: What was the result of Peter's confession?**

**Answer:** The church would be built upon Peter's confession.

**Read Matthew 16:17-18**

*And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. <sup>18</sup>And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.*

This passage has for many years been one of the most controversial for the church. The Roman Catholic church has largely held this passage as their main reasoning for declaring Peter as the first Pope. In Greek, "Peter" (Petros) is translated to "stone," which is closely related to (Petra) meaning "rock." Peter's other name in New Testament is Cephas (Kepha) which in Aramaic means, "rock." It also translates to Greek to mean "this rock." Scholars have debated the meaning, and place this statement from Christ into one of three categories to find its real meaning.

1. Jesus was referring to Peter himself.
2. Jesus means Peter's confession.
3. Jesus was speaking of himself and his teachings.

It is generally accepted by most believers that Jesus was referring to Peter himself and his personal confession, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Peter's confession made it clear, Jesus was the Messiah. Peter's confession of Christ would become a rallying cry for all believers that we still use today. To become a believer, one must confess that Jesus is the Christ and Savior of the world.

#### **Read Ephesians 2:20-21**

*...built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone,<sup>21</sup> in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord.*

#### **Read Revelation 21:14**

*And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

Do you believe Jesus' statement gave Peter a lofty position ahead of the other apostles? Why or why not?

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Peter's confession did not give him a higher position over the other leaders. Peter did not have more authority, nor does it imply Peter is to be held in greater regard of the other apostles. Peter also doesn't hold a greater office in the church. Keep in mind, Peter does have a central role in the beginning of the book of Acts, but even then he disappears from the book of Acts in chapter 15. In fact, we are told in Acts 15:7-21 Peter has a voice on the Jerusalem council, but James had the final and decisive word. Jesus will build His church and even though it would be founded on the words and actions of the apostles and other leaders, Ephesians 2:20 tells us "Jesus is the cornerstone."

*So, then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God,<sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone...*

#### **Ephesians 2:19-20**

Why is it important for God's people to recognize Jesus as the cornerstone of the church?

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How does our confession of Christ help build the church today?

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**Read Matthew 16:19**

*I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.*

Peter is given authority through preaching the Gospel to admit entrance to God's kingdom. It is the same authority given to the rest of the disciples and ultimately to all who proclaim the Gospel. Peter is also given authority to exercise discipline over what is right and what is wrong. That authority was extended to the church in Matthew 18:16-19.

*But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. <sup>17</sup>If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. <sup>18</sup>Truly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. <sup>19</sup>Again I say to you, if two of you agree on earth about anything they ask, it will be done for them by my Father in heaven.*

How should we interpret Jesus' words in these verses?

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What does He promise the disciples?

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**YOUR VIEWPOINT**

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**III. CONCLUSION**

**Question to be answered: Why did Jesus warn the disciples to not tell anyone?**

**Answer:** The Concept of Jesus/Messiah was greatly misunderstood by both the disciples and the crowds. Jesus was just beginning to explain His role as Messiah.

**Read Matthew 16:21-23**

*From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. <sup>22</sup>And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you." <sup>23</sup>But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.*

Look at the first three words in verse 21, "From that time." Jesus, based on what had just transpired with Peter and the disciples, transitions His teachings to reveal to them He is the Messiah who must suffer and die for the sins of the world. Jesus' Galilean ministry has ended, and He is now headed to Jerusalem to fulfill the prophecies from years before. Jesus is now calling them to follow Him beyond an earthly ministry. He is now showing them they must suffer with Him and be rewarded by spending eternity with Him in heaven.

How did Peter respond to this news?

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How is this a direct contrast of what Peter had just experienced with the Lord a few moments before?

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How do you think you would have responded to Jesus?

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Peter went from being on the mountain top with Jesus to the valley. He went from being told here are the keys to the kingdom, to being rebuked by Jesus. Peter didn't understand the Messiah was going to face suffering and death. He didn't have a Kingdom-centered mindset. He was only focused on the here and the now, not what was to come. He was not seeing the bigger picture of the spiritual impact Jesus was to have on the whole world that would impact all generations. He was not seeing that Jesus came and taught that sacrifice is a part of the Kingdom and His calling. Jesus accepted the suffering and death He would face over His temporal feelings. Jesus was focused on the Kingdom.

How often do you focus on the wrong things? Name some of those things we focus on that keep us from focusing on our kingdom gift known as heaven.

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**Read Matthew 6:19-21**

*Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, <sup>20</sup>but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

What does it mean to have a kingdom mindset on earth?

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**YOUR VIEWPOINT**

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**IV. EXTRA TIME**

In what ways can we confess Christ today?

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**Read Matthew 17:22-23**

*As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men, <sup>23</sup>and they will kill him, and he will be raised on the third day." And they were greatly distressed.*

Why were the disciples so distressed?

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How will having a kingdom-centered mind help us to confess Christ to a lost world?

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**V. PRAYER TIME**

Pray to have a kingdom-centered mind in everything you do this week.

# Rooted In His Word: Foundation

## Matthew 22:34-40 – The Greatest Commandment

May 23, 2021

### FOR THE LEADER

In the sports world there is a constant debate that occurs wondering in each sport who is the greatest to ever play the game. On message boards and social media these discussions usually have the title G.O.A.T., meaning "Greatest Of All Time." In the NBA the two names usually in the mix more than others is Michael Jordan and LeBron James. In the MLB you would hear names like Willie Mayes, Babe Ruth, Derek Jeter, Ty Cobb, etc. In the NFL names like Tom Brady, Jim Brown, Jerry Rice, and Lawrence Taylor. In each sport you could make a case for each one of these men and many others you can think of who had a lasting impact on their sport through their gifted abilities.

In our lesson today we will be studying the Greatest Commandment found in Matthew 22:34-40. Jesus was often questioned or challenged in His understanding and interpretation of the commandments in scripture. In chapter 22 of Matthew, Jesus is questioned by the Pharisees concerning taxes, by the Sadducees concerning the resurrection, and by a lawyer over which commandment is the greatest or most important. The Sadducees and the Pharisees had been asking Jesus a lot of questions. In fact, the Pharisees had plotted to get Him to incriminate himself, trying to "entangle Him in His words." (v. 15) Keep in mind the Sadducees theology was based on the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible. They didn't believe in a resurrection because it wasn't until later scriptures, such as, Isaiah, Daniel, etc. we see teachings pointing to Jesus and the resurrection. From Genesis to Deuteronomy there are over 600 laws given for man to follow. Those laws were the basis for Jewish belief and for religious practices. The encounter Jesus is having with the religious leaders of the day is a remarkable scene because it clearly shows the power of God through the spoken words of Jesus.

**MAIN GOAL:** It is impossible for us to live "good enough" lives based on Old Testament laws, so Jesus gave us the blueprint for loving God, loving others, and living for Him.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Think back to your own wedding or a wedding ceremony you have been to recently. In a Christian marriage the minister or officiant will ask the bride and groom to make promises to one another. These promises or commitments are designed to show each other and those in attendance their mutual love and respect they have for each other and to the bond of marriage. Being married to someone is a choice. We get to choose who we want to love and spend our lives with. Human love is often tied to circumstances and personal agendas. God's love isn't bound by those things and in this passage Jesus clearly tells the scribes the greatest commandment and the one that follows must come with "no strings attached."

**Read Matthew 22:34-40**

*But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together.*

<sup>35</sup>*And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. <sup>36</sup>“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” <sup>37</sup>And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. <sup>38</sup>This is the great and first commandment.*

<sup>39</sup>*And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. <sup>40</sup>On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.*

**Read 1 John 4:8**

*Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.*

Based on these two passages of scripture how should we interpret Jesus’ words for us to love God and love others?

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As believers, we all know “God is love.” We cannot truly know and express love to God and others apart from a real relationship with the Father. In order to love as God commands, His love must reside in our hearts. His love is first given to us, until then we really can’t love.

**Read 1 John 4:19**

*We love because he first loved us.*

We love him, because he first loved us. Real Godly love isn’t possible without a personal relationship with Christ. Not all people express love, because without Christ we cannot know real love. Jesus loved us first, meaning when we had nothing to offer, when we were of no benefit to Him, He still loved us unconditionally.

How does it make you feel to know God loved you first?

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**Look back at our Matthew 22 passage again.**

Based on the scribe’s purpose to entangle Jesus, how did their plan backfire?

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Jesus’ words let the Pharisees know love for God and love for people was the way the Father intended for all people to live. Jesus lays out the requirements by saying God is first, people are second. We are responsible for loving God first and loving others second.

In what ways do we see this play out differently in the world today?

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### YOUR VIEWPOINT

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## II. GET FOCUSED

### Read Deuteronomy 6:4-5

*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. <sup>5</sup>You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 is known as the "Shema." Shema means "to hear, or listen." It is considered the most important prayer in Judaism. The Jews quoted this passage daily to remind them that God is the Lord.

How do your personal prayers acknowledge God as the Lord?

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Why do you think Jesus quoted from the Shema?

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What does it mean to love with all your heart?

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The heart is the center of life for all of us. The heart allows us to show affection. As believers our goal should be to show God a genuine love that is real and not contrived. A heartfelt love will be shown on a daily basis to the Lord.

What does it mean to love with all your soul?

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The soul is at the center of our conscience and the essence of our being. This means we should love God with everything that is in us and with all that we possess. It means we are constantly aware of God in our decisions and in our daily walk with Him. To love God with all our soul means from the very depths of our lives and that kind of love cannot be superficial and fake.

Name some of the characteristics you will find in someone that loves with everything they have?

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What does it mean to love God with all of your mind?

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The mind gives us our ability to reason and understand. To love God with our minds, is to consistently focus on Him and what He has done for us. It means He will constantly be at the center of our thoughts. It means we will make decisions based on scripture. It means he isn't just in our past or our future, but also in our present everyday lives.

What happens when we make decisions without considering the Lord first?

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**Read Matthew 22:38-39**

*This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup>And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*

Why do you think Jesus didn't stop after he answered the Pharisee's question?

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How do these commands go hand-in-hand?

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If "God is love" is it possible to love one without the other? Why or Why not?

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**Read 1 John 4:20**

*If anyone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen.*

Jesus gives the second command to remind us of our responsibility to love others as God loves us. Loving others as ourselves is really hard to accomplish. Truly loving someone is a sign of our own salvation.

**Read 1 John 3:14**

*We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brothers. Whoever does not love abides in death.*

Why is loving others so hard?

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Do you agree these two commands are essential to being a witness for Jesus in the world we live in? Why or Why not?

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**YOUR VIEWPOINT**

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**III. CONCLUSION**

How does your life measure up when filtering it through these two commands given by Jesus? Do you say today without hesitation, "I love the Lord with all my heart, my soul, my mind, and my strength?"

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Can you say without hesitation, "I love my neighbor as I love myself?" Explain.

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How would the world look if God's people took these commands seriously? Explain.

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Do you believe much of the turmoil and difficulty in our world today is a direct result of a lack of genuine love? How so?

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**Read Mark 12:28-34**

*And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>30</sup>And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' <sup>31</sup>The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." <sup>32</sup>And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. <sup>33</sup>And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." <sup>34</sup>And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.*

Mark's gospel gives a little more information. What did the scribe realize?

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The scribe realized real love satisfied God more than sacrifices and offerings. There is no better way to please God than to love Him and love others. Without love we cannot please God! We can be faithful to the church, give our tithes, and even support missions that share God's love, but if we don't love ourselves, we've missed God's will for our lives. He certainly deserves our best. Do you believe the very best that we can give is a heart of love? Why or Why not?

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**YOUR VIEWPOINT**

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**IV. EXTRA TIME**

**Read Luke 19:10**

*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*

Why is it important for God's people to love the lost?

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How have you shown the lost God's love this month?

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**V. PRAYER TIME**

Pray and ask God to give you a real love for people.

# Rooted In His Word: Foundation

## Matthew 28 – The Great Commission

May 30, 2021

### FOR THE LEADER

Expectations are everywhere. Some expectations are a requirement, some are opportunities, and some are both a requirement and an opportunity. Think back to when you were a child. Did you have chores or responsibilities you had to complete on a regular basis? What kind of expectations did your parents or guardians have for you, maybe daily making your bed, or taking out the trash after dinner? Maybe it was things that weren't spoken everyday but as a child you knew the expectation was for it to get done, such as, dirty clothes should not be on the floor but in the hamper, etc. As a parent or grandparent, maybe you have expectations for your children and grandchildren. In a job, employees have and know what is expected and required to fulfill the work they have been employed to complete. For students, teachers and professors will give their expectations for their class and it becomes the responsibility of the student to accomplish those requirements in order to pass the class.

Other expectations should be viewed as an opportunity. For an expectation to be an opportunity it must be viewed as an obligation based on your own choice. In other words, you get to make a choice whether you fulfill the expectations that have been placed on you. You see, if a requirement isn't fulfilled there will probably be lasting, tangible repercussions, such as a failing grade, being grounded or loss of a job. An opportunity may not have a tangible repercussion in the moment, but the lasting repercussions or consequences can be very devastating. This is where we will spend our time today in our lesson. In Matthew 28 Jesus gives his followers a command, a requirement, an opportunity; His followers are given the chance to change the lives of lost people. By doing so and following Jesus' command to "Go and make disciples," it becomes an opportunity for God's people to fulfill the expectations Jesus left following His death, burial and resurrection.

Jesus requires all believers to make the time to fulfill the opportunity he has given to us to share the Gospel message with the lost. Our theme and purpose for this week isn't new news.

**MAIN GOAL:** Jesus expects His followers to take full advantage of the opportunity to share His love with a lost world, even when they don't feel it is their responsibility.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### Read Matthew 28:16-20

*Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup>And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>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, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

When you think of the Great Commission given by the resurrected Jesus, what comes to mind?

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On a scale from 1-10 with 1 being "not much" and 10 being "constantly," how often do you think about fulfilling the Great Commission?

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Go around the room and have each class member share who fulfilled the Great Commission in their life by sharing faith with them (teachers you should share first).

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Where would you be if someone hadn't taken the Great Commission seriously and shared the gospel with you?

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Beginning with verse 18, from Matthew 28 Jesus speaks of the authority given to Him. Let's examine where the authority Jesus speaks of came from.

**Read Matthew 28:18**

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."*

**Read John 3:35**

*The Father loves the Son and has placed everything in his hands.*

**Read John 13:3**

*Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God...*

**Read Ephesians 1:20-21**

*...he exerted when he raised Christ from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, <sup>21</sup>far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.*

**Read John 17:2**

*For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.*

Based on these verses what does Jesus mean when he says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me?"

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The Incarnate Christ possessed the full authority of the Father.

So, this leads us to a bigger question, before His resurrection did Jesus have the authority? Did something change?

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**Read John 1:1-4**

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was with God in the beginning. <sup>3</sup>Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.

Jesus always has been, always will be, God! He was with the Father, the creator of the universe, from the very beginning. Jesus did not become authoritative at his incarnation nor did He at His resurrection. But there is a distinction. Before the virgin birth, God the Son existed, but Jesus, the man, who came in God-form had not appeared on earth yet. He did not yet exist. Before the incarnation God the Son existed with all authority. But God as man, **Jesus Christ**, had not yet died for sinners. Jesus had not fulfilled His purpose to come and take man's place for the sins of the world. Jesus had not removed or stripped Satan of his condemnation of man. The shed blood of Jesus did that. Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen Savior, was triumphant over sin and therefore Jesus was now exalted by God as the redeemer, the risen one who held all authority in His hands. John 1 teaches us Jesus was with God and is God therefore everything that was made He made.

**Read Hebrews 1:3**

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

**Read Colossians 1:17**

He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Based on these verses how does Jesus hold all things together?

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It's important for us to recognize Jesus' power, His authority extends over the entire earth. That will be important as we look further into this passage.

## YOUR VIEWPOINT

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## II. GET FOCUSED

### Read Matthew 28:19-20

*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, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.*

We have just established Jesus has the authority to make any command He wishes. Now we look at what he commanded us to do.

Do you believe the Great Commission is expected and required of every believer?

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Notice in verse 19 Jesus says, "Therefore." Meaning if you understand and know Jesus has all authority and power and you are a follower of His then listen to what comes next. The word let us know what Jesus had just said about His authority was a precursor to what was about to come. What are the Four Commands Jesus gives in the Great Commission?

- Go
- Make disciples
- Baptize them
- Teach them to observe

How are you fulfilling these four commands currently in your life?

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Knowing Jesus' authority extends over the entire earth means Jesus' command to "Go and make disciples" isn't confined to our corner of the world, or the parts of the world we like or feel comfortable with. All authority over the earth means we are called to "Go and make disciples" of all nations, all ethnic groups, all around the world.

Do you believe we should all be willing to **go** to the nations, or do you believe it's not your job, that's for someone else? Why or why not?

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What is the vision statement of Lexington Baptist Church? How does it connect with this Commission?

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How would you define "making disciples?"

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**Read Luke 14:26-27**

*Large crowds were traveling with Jesus, and turning to them he said: <sup>26</sup>"If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. <sup>27</sup>And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."*

What did it mean to "carry their cross?"

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Carrying your cross is a daily responsibility for believers. It means removing pride, selfishness, jealousy and anger and replacing it with love, honor and respect for mankind. Becoming a disciple means releasing yourself from an old life and walking in a new life in Christ. To make disciples requires a disciple of Jesus being available and ready to reach the lost.

Why is it important to baptize believers? How does baptism grow out of discipleship?

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**Read Romans 6:3-4**

*Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup>We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.*

Jesus commands us to trust Him and be baptized because it shows an outward witness to express your faith in Jesus to others.

How do all three parts of the Trinity go to work in a new believer?

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God becomes our Father, Jesus becomes our Lord, the Spirit becomes our indwelling partner and power in life.

How should a Christian's life reflect the Trinity?

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The last command of the Great Commission is often overlooked. Most of the time we hear in sermons or lessons we are to "Go and make disciples, baptizing them" but not often do we take the last command to heart. In church life we often fail after baptism to disciple them through training and teaching. Verse 20 proves to us making disciples is more than conversions and baptisms. Discipleship is teaching and obeying Christ. Let's be honest, it's not easy to teach someone to obey Christ.

What are some ways you have had people teach you to obey the commands of Jesus?

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Name someone who had an impact on you about obeying Jesus and give a short testimony about how they impacted you.

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**Read Romans 8:29**

*And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*

Why is it important for God's people to become more like Christ each day?

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**YOUR VIEWPOINT**

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**III. CONCLUSION****Read Matthew 28:20 again**

*...and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.*

Jesus says, "I am with you always, to the very end of the age." What do those words mean to you as you navigate the Christian life?

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**Read Matthew 1:23**

*The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means "God with us").*

From the beginning of Jesus' entry into the world from a virgin mom, God has promised Jesus would be with his people. Immanuel means, "God with us." How do Jesus' last words in Matthew 28 and God's promise from Matthew 1:23 help us to carry out the Great Commission?

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Do you believe the Great Commission, given by Jesus, is an expectation and a requirement? Why or why not?

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As we said in the introduction, what is the repercussion when we do not carry out the Great Commission?

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## **IV. EXTRA TIME**

Can you name a family or person you are praying for that is lost? Are you praying for a divine opportunity to share your faith with them and fulfill the Great Commission?

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## **V. PRAYER TIME**

Take a moment and pray for a family or person who is lost and a divine opportunity to share the gospel with them.







