“Simple Instruction, Clear Choice”

May 6, 2018

I Corinthians 3:6-16

Find a Bible and please open with me to the 5th chapter of Romans. In a moment we will read four verses from it.

Every house needs a good foundation. Every building needs a good foundation. CT, you know, has a huge foundation problem. There are forty towns in our state whose foundations are literally crumbling and in need of major renovation. And, of course, the taller the building, the more solid a foundation is needed.

And every life needs a good foundation. I have a friend; a Christian. He has no foundation or, at least, not a good foundation. And I say that kindly because in almost every conversation I have had with him over the past year, his conversation turns to the same things; the exact same things; the exact same people he is upset with; and has been upset with for years; and the exact same words come out of his mouth.

I listen. I listen patiently. I even attempt to instruct and encourage him; all so far to no avail. And I faithfully pray for him.

So, Christians need a solid foundation; a true foundation. You need a solid and true foundation as I too also need a solid and true foundation. And here’s why. Because, after being saved for so many years, those who don’t have a good foundation for their Christian life become unteachable. My friend is a Christian. But he, in my opinion, of course, is unteachable.

Now, there are many reasons for a good foundation. But one is so that you can build a solid Christ-like life on that foundation.

What’s on my heart today is this. There are two foundation-building books in your Bible; the Book of Romans and the Book of Genesis. And right here in Romans five you will see this. You are either building your life on a lasting foundation or it’s weak, shaky, and unreliable foundation.

Do you remember what Jesus said about the foundation you are laying? Matthew 7:24 *“Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: (25) and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.*

*(26) And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: (27) And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.*

*(28) And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: (29) for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.”*

Everyone here has had the heavy winds and floods of trials come upon them, as Jesus says. And, according to Him, your house, a symbol for your life, either continues to stand and to withstand those storms or it falls for one main reason; your foundation.

So, Romans five. I’ve titled today’s sermon “Simple Instruction, Clear Choice” because of four verses in this chapter. Shall we pray?

Here are those four verses. Please follow with me in your Bible at Romans 5:18 *“Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. (19) For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.*

*(20) Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: (21) that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”*

You know by now, from the earlier verses of Romans five, that the greatest contrast ever between two people is found in this chapter. Adam and Jesus, just like the north and south poles, are polar opposites.

Now, we’re all affected by both of them. And the foundation of your life is greatly affected by your relationship to them. And, by the way, Jesus is sometimes referred to as the Last Adam. I Corinthians 15:45 *“And so it is written, the first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.”*

So, Adam, what did we inherit from you?

First, then, our foundation in Adam.

You are a child of Adam. Every one of us came from Adam. There are no aliens. There are no alien children. There are no Martians who have invaded our planet. And, you are not descended from apes and monkeys.

The truth is simple. Yes, there are complicated things. There are things we have difficulty understanding. But, it’s a fact of history that every single person born into the human race came from first two human beings that God created.

So, the real question is this. What did you inherit from great, great, great, and greatest grandparent, whose name was Adam? You see, according to the Bible, it’s an essential part of a Christian’s understanding to see you connection to Adam.

Let me say it like this. “Adam, God gave you a simple instruction and you had a clear choice.” That instruction was this. Genesis 3:3 *“…God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.”*

I grant you that there are many passages in the Bible that are difficult and need time and attention to get the light into our souls. But Genesis 3:3 is not one of them. Simple instruction “Ye” meaning “Adam and Eve” shall not eat of it.”

And so, with this command, Adam has a clear choice. “Don’t eat from that tree or eat from that tree.” And he makes a choice. He eats the fruit from the tree that God said “Ye shall not eat it.” And after Adam makes the choice, the LORD says to him Genesis 3:11 *“…Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?”*

How many times did you say to one of your children “The answer is “NO”? It’s a small word. But it carries a lot of weight, doesn’t it? When you took you son or daughter shopping, what did they do? What did they ask for? What did they want? And, do you remember saying to them “No, you can’t get that” or “No, we can’t afford that”?

Folks, God has never been a complicated parent. He’s not a complicated Creator. He’s also not a complicated speaker. He says what He means and, as you also said to your children “I mean what I say.”

God said that Adam and Eve were to eat their meals from every single tree in the Garden. There was plenty of food because there were plenty of trees with plenty of fruit on them. And one simple instruction from God was this *“Do not eat from that one tree.”*

Now, what’s going through your mind right now? Are you thinking *“Why didn’t they just do what the LORD said?”* No, you’re thinking exactly the way Adam was thinking that day. *“What’s so important about that fruit from that tree?”*

You see, if the LORD came to you this week and said “The only thing I am withholding from you is this particular thing.” You can have all the rest. I just don’t want you to have this.” Would you say to yourself “It’s probably because God is so good and He knows this will harm me and He doesn’t want me to get hurt; that’s why He’s telling me I can’t have this”? Likely not. Rather, we’d be thinking “Why not? Why is He withholding this from me?”

Folks, your forefather, Mr. Adam, was given one simple instruction “Don’t eat of this one tree because if you do, you’ll die.” And that was a test. And the Bible says this.

Genesis 3:6 *“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.”*

You are connected to a forefather who, when given a simple moral instruction from his Creator and Father, made a choice; to disobey.

Look now at Romans 5:18 in light of Genesis three. Romans 5:18 *“Therefore as* ***by the offence of one*** *judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.”*

Adam didn’t hate God. Adam didn’t hate his wife. Adam wasn’t confused. He wasn’t ignorant or unintelligent. He had very good hearing. He understood. And he and Eve could eat from every single tree in the Garden of Eden, except one. Yet, with all that, he made the choice to disobey his Creator and his Father.

Do you see this word “offence”? The original word is παραπτωματος; and it’s translated in the Bible like this “trespass,” “fault,” “sin,” and “offense.” A trespass is “anything you do that is not morally correct.”

And with that one trespass, judgment came upon all men to condemnation. Look again at verse nineteen. Romans 5:19 *“For as* ***by one man's disobedience*** *many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”*

So, what is your connection to your forefather Adam? By his trespass; by his disobedience, you became a sinner and you are under God’s condemnation.

Let’s see if I can illustrate this for you. Do you remember the name Jim Jones? Mr. Jones began a cult he called “The People’s Temple.” It was located in a country just east of Venezuela called Guyana on the northern coast of South America.

And this cult leader, Jim Jones, had following of about a thousand people. So, because he felt under attack, he decided that everyone connected to him would drink a cyanide-laced fruit drink. On November 18, 1978, 914 people drank it along with him; including three hundred children. And all 914 people died. No one escaped. Now, granted, 87 other members of the People’s Temple survived because they were elsewhere, away from the Temple for the day.

And as horrible as that sounds to us, something similar happened to the entire human race on the day Adam chose to eat from a specific fruit tree that God had commanded him to not eat from. We are all affected by the sin of Adam.

Now, some would say “I wasn’t there. So, why should I be counted as a sinner like Adam?” And folks, you may have even asked yourself a similar question. So, here’s the answer. “If Adam’s sin didn’t turn you into a sinner, who did?”

Everybody here has committed sin. We’ve all broken the Ten Commandments. We all stand guilty in the LORD’s sight. And we all stand condemned, not because of Adam’s sin, but because of our own. And so, we all must give an account to God. Romans 14:12 *“So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God.”*

Honestly, like you, I wish I was never connected to Adam. But I am. We are. And like my father and my grand-father and my great-grand-father, I came into the world a sinner. And I too sinned. And, to be honest, I enjoyed sinning; just like you have.

So, it may be true that we don’t want to be associated with Adam. But, we are all “in Adam.” And, according to I Corinthians 15:22 *“For as* ***in Adam all die****, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”*

First, our foundation in Adam.

Second, our foundation in Christ.

Folks, according to the Bible, your connection with Adam is a physical one and a real one. We are sinners for real. And we, like Adam, really die.

Now, on the other hand, our foundation in Christ is the polar opposite and a whole lot more encouraging. Look again at God’s Word, verse eighteen. I can’t stress enough this huge disconnect between Adam and Jesus. And here’s why. Look with me at just one the little word. It’s the word “by.” The Holy Spirit puts it here four times. And it stresses just how much Adam and Jesus are opposite.

Romans 5:18 *“Therefore* ***as by*** *the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even* ***so by*** *the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life. (19) For* ***as by*** *one man's disobedience many were made sinners,* ***so by*** *the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.”*

The term “by” means “through.” Can you see that through Adam you received one thing and through Christ you receive something else? All that you received from Adam is exactly what you don’t want. And all you receive from Christ is exactly what you need most. And, what’s even better is this. What you received from Adam gets removed through Christ.

Let me say it this way. You didn’t have a choice when it came to being connected to Adam and Eve. And the reason is simple. It’s because you didn’t have a choice to your being born. But you do have a choice when it comes to being joined to Christ.

Whenever you see yourself as you really are before God, it changes you in some way. When you see yourself as a sinner, you see yourself condemned because of your own personal disobedience. And you experience guilt. And when you discover that God loved you so much that He gave His Only Son as a Substitute. And that your Substitute paid the complete penalty for all your sins, you discover that, when you receive Him by faith, all the Christ is, completely changes you in your relationship to God.

So, God brings you His Good News and then you have a choice to make. That choice is simple.

Will I trust this Jesus Christ or will I reject Him? John 1:11 *“He came unto his own, and his own received him not. (12) But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: …”*

Will I repent and be converted? Acts 3:19 *“Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out …”*

Will I believe on Christ for salvation? Acts 16:31 *“And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved …”*

Will I call upon Him to be saved? Romans 10:13 *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*

You know by personal experience what it is to be related to the First Adam. But, do you see what you have now that you have a new relationship with God because of Jesus Christ?

One of the wonders of the Christian life is this. We’re always in need of reminders. We constantly need to be reminded of the things that are true about us. So God is your Reminder. And Romans five is a perfect example of this.

Look at what Adam gives you; sin, judgment, condem-nation, and death. Now look at what Christ brings you; grace, the free gift, justification of life, and righteousness.

What you received from Adam is exactly what you don’t want. And all you receive from Christ is exactly what you need most.

Let me show you what I mean. This is the testimony of a man named David Koziol. “I started to read the Scriptures and to listen to sermons. God gave me a knowledge of sin and I saw sin in my own life; I saw its ugliness. Before that I thought that my life was good, but in the face of truths I was coming to understand, I saw that I was spiritually dead, and in fact I’d never known God. I saw clearly that to live a more moral life didn’t make me any more acceptable before God.

There was no middle way; you are either with the Lord or against him, in Adam or in Christ. The words that I heard and read convinced me that to receive Christ meant receiving him into every part of my life, not just into one or selected parts, but every part.

It became clear to me that I couldn’t confess Christ as Lord and go on living carelessly and defiantly. Will I have more falls into sin? Yes, while I am in the body in a fallen world, but am I willing to sin deliberately and then shrug, after knowing my Saviour and Lord, aware of what he did for me.

“I came to learn that my salvation was not based on my personal efforts. Salvation is apart from me. If salvation depended on me and my works, that would be the straight road to Hell. But the beauty of the Gospel and its truth is that Christ accomplished everything for my salvation.”

Titus 3:5 *“Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; …”*

‘He loved me e’er I knew him,’ when I was deep in my sins and unconscious of His person and work even then He’d loved me, before the foundation of the world He loved me. I was a religious person, but as a Catholic I didn’t know the grace of God and that Christ’s salvation was free. I came to know these things from clear verses in the Bible and it all became increasingly clear to me after years of struggling to meet God’s standards, after striving for some extra spiritual status.

It was God who had put me in Christ; God justified me; God clothed me with the righteousness of his Son; God did it all, and He gives it all utterly freely to sinners who will receive him as an act of His grace. The Lord Jesus paid the price of it all, there on Calvary’s cross; and He calls every sinner to come to him and have life by His death. He became the Lamb of God and shed His blood for a sinner like me. Then may that love motivate all I do to live for Him. To Him be the glory!”

God gave Adam a simple instruction. Eat of every tree in this garden except this one. And if you eat of this tree, you will die. Adam had a clear choice. You have a choice. You know you are a sinner and under the LORD’s just condem-nation. And you know that Christ died for every one of your sins. And He says “Call on Me and be saved.” Romans 10:13 *“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.”*

Have you called upon Him? Are you saved? He will save you today is you will place your faith in Him alone.

John 3:16 *“God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”*

How can you be saved? How To Be Saved

* Repent - change your mind about God, Christ, your sin, and God’s free gift of salvation.
* Believe - simply trust Jesus Christ alone as the One Who paid the entire penalty for your sins.

Would you pray this prayer today? The Sinner’s Prayer. *“Father, I realize I am a sinner. I believe that Jesus died in my place on the cross. I repent of my sins. I want to be completely forgiven today. I am trusting you right now to save me. Thank you. Amen”*

Jesus said, Revelation 3:20 *“Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If any man hear My voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him and he with Me.”*

Shall we pray?

Hymn # 676 “O Jesus I Have Promised”