

Build on the Rock

Jesus said at the end of the Sermon on the Mount,

“²⁴Whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. ²⁶“But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” — **Matthew 7:24-27**

God is our **Rock**. Sand and dirt wash away; rock remains. E.g., “Stone Mountain,” “Limestone County,” etc.

You **will experience problems** in life, and you need a solid foundation. Building on Jesus will give you strength — intellectually, emotionally, spiritually — and allow you to survive the storms of life.

You **build** on the rock **by obeying** what Jesus says.

A Foundation for Your Life

A Foundation ...

God is our Rock, and there is no other Rock! On the last day of Moses’ life, he sang a song to the people of Israel. It was a song of warning He called heaven and earth to witness to God’s greatness and the people’s unfaithfulness. He gives a brief history of that young nation and shows reasons to rely on Jehovah.

Deuteronomy 32. (Selected verses with a focus on God, our Rock.)

Verses 1-6. [³Ascribe greatness to our God. ⁴**He is the Rock**, His work is perfect.]

Verses 15-22. [¹⁵he forsook God who made him, And **scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation**. ¹⁸**Of the Rock who begot you, you are unmindful...**]

Verses 26-31a. [³⁰How could one chase a thousand, And two put ten thousand to flight, Unless their Rock had sold them, And the Lord had surrendered them? ³¹For **their rock is not like our Rock**.]

Verses 39-41, 43. [³⁹Now see that I, even I, am He, And **there is no God besides Me**; I kill and I make alive.]

Moses finished the song and then basically preached what Jesus said in Matthew 7:24-27, that **obedience brings life**:

⁴⁶Set your hearts on all the words which I testify among you today, which you shall command your children to be careful to observe—all the words of this law. ⁴⁷For it is **not a futile** thing for you, because **it is your life**, and by this word you shall prolong your days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to possess.”

For YOUR ...

No one else can build your house for you! You must have your own faith. See **John 4**:

³⁹**Many** of the Samaritans of that city **believed** in Him **because of the word of the woman** who testified, “He told me all that I ever did.” ⁴⁰So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. ⁴¹And **many more believed because of His own word**. ⁴²Then they said to the woman, “**Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him** and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.”

You may believe all the right things, and *that faith can save you!* But a faith based on what someone else has told you may not support you during the storms of life. If the only *reason* you can give for your faith is, “That’s what my parents/preacher/friend said,” then you need a more solid foundation. Spend “a

couple of days with Jesus.” Ask the hard questions. See the answers and the evidence for yourself. Make sure you know *why* you believe. You can’t hide from the storms in your parent’s “house”!

LIFE!

This is **your life** — don’t blow it; **define** it! Don’t fritter it away; **own** it! Don’t just let it slide by; **LIVE** it! Take hold of the mission and the promises that God gives you!

Moses said that the word of God is our life. Obeying God’s word brings life and blessings.

The One Foundation

Church people are caving in to ecumenical pressure. (Describe sharing pulpits. Pretending difference don’t matter.)

“World travel and getting to know clergy of all denominations has helped mold me into an ecumenical being. We’re separated by theology and, in some instances, culture and race, but all that means nothing to me any more.” — *Billy Graham*

People don’t want to “condemn” anyone (the billions of Buddhists, Muslims, Hindus, etc.), but **every choice you make** will potentially make you like Noah, a “preacher of righteousness” (**2 Peter 2:5**) who “prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith” (**Hebrews 11:7**). Noah was not setting out to condemn others; he was living a life that found grace in the eyes of the Lord (**Genesis 6:8**) and doing the right thing and making himself an heir of righteousness. What others do is *on them*.

Jesus said,

John 14:6 “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

Acts 4:12 Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

Peter said,

John 6:68 Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

The Holy Spirit said,

Ephesians 4:4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.

Ephesians 2:19 You are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.

Acts 4:11 [Jesus Christ of Nazareth, v. 10] is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’ ¹² Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

A Foundation for Your Brain

Leave No Doubt

Listen to Peter’s **confidence**:

Matthew 16:16 “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

John 6:68 “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. ⁶⁹ Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

See his boldness preaching against the Sanhedrin and Jewish leaders who were trying to stop him and the other apostles:

Acts 4:11 [Jesus Christ of Nazareth, v. 10] is the ‘stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.’¹² Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”

Acts 4:19 Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.²⁰ We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.

So he tells us *why* he’s so bold: He was an eye- and ear witness of Jesus!

2 Peter 1:16 For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were **eyewitnesses** of His majesty.¹⁷ For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such **a voice came** to Him from the Excellent Glory: “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”¹⁸ And **we heard this voice** which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.

How can we have Peter’s boldness?

2 Peter 1:19 And so we have **the prophetic word confirmed**, which **you do well to heed** as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts;²⁰ knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation,²¹ for prophecy never came by the will of man, but **holy men** of God spoke as they were **moved by the Holy Spirit**.

Read **1 Peter 1:3-12**:

⁷ The **genuineness of your faith**, being much more precious than gold that perishes, though it is tested by fire, may be found to praise, honor, and glory at the revelation of Jesus Christ,⁸ **whom having not seen you love**. Though now you do not see Him, **yet believing**, you **rejoice** with joy inexpressible and full of glory,⁹ receiving the end of your faith—the **salvation** of your souls.

Having not seen Him, we can still have a genuine faith full of joy and glory and receive salvation. We simply need to trust the eyewitnesses!

Know *why* you believe in Him. **Here are eight reasons to believe in the Bible and Christianity:**

- **Explanations.** The Bible explains, in the best plausible way, our origins, my heart, evil, man’s destiny, etc.
- **Prophecy.** No other religion has ‘em! Many in the Bible were centuries old before being fulfilled, even calling the names of people in the distant future (e.g., Cyrus, Josiah)
- **Miracles.** No other religion has ‘em! (not the verifiable, Bible type of miracle which even the enemies cannot dispute, e.g., **Acts 3:2, 6-9; 4:16**)
- **Claims.** Jesus made bold claims. E.g., I am... the light of the world, the bread of heaven, the way, the truth, the life. I AM!
The Bible makes bold claims for itself, too! **2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21.**
- **The empty tomb** of Jesus. Try as people do, they cannot come up with a plausible alternative explanation for the fact that we do not have a tomb for Jesus with a body in it! His resurrection is the only plausible explanation, and one which is attested by eyewitnesses. (**1 Corinthians 15:5-8**)
- **The book, itself.** The Bible was written over 1,500 years on 3 continents in 3 languages by more than 40 authors, but containing one unified Theme, the Gospel. In modern times, we see inconsistencies and contradictions even, for example, during a single season of a TV show!
- **The manuscripts.** Their study may seem boring, but they matter! We see that they have been exquisitely preserved, and they give us strong reason to trust the Bible. We have *more* and *better* manuscripts than any other religion or book!
- **Promises.** The Bible, such as “your house won’t fall”

For details on some of these items, see <https://www.youtube.com/user/BibleHighlightsGC/playlists>

A Foundation for Your Heart

All of us experience **problems**; everyone will have reason to **fear**; everyone will get **weary** battling these problems. (Just a day on the water with sun and movement will make you tired! What about a whole day in a storm!?)

Storms: **Rain**, from above = blinding; **waves**, from beneath = scary and powerful; **wind** = constant and unseen; pressure from all sides.

Forces of nature can drown out all other sensations. E.g., the wind on Dingle peninsula, County Kerry, Ireland, looking out over the Atlantic Ocean — can't hear birds, the nearby sheep, the city below. E.g., the force of water pounding relentlessly at Devil's Cauldron in Baños, Ecuador.

Similarly, when we're in the midst of a problem, it's hard to think about anything else. But two godly men show us how to deal with a variety of emotional storms, **Elijah** and **David**.

Imagine **Elijah's loneliness** as he hid in fear for his life at the brook Cherith (**1 Kings 17**). He had called for drought (**James 5**) in order to get people's attention and humble them before God. Now he was exiled and was being hunted. Even after his awesome victory on Mount Carmel (**1 Kings 18**), Queen Jezebel put a price on his head (**1 Kings 19**), and he fled in fear. He let his loneliness run amok, and he even prayed to die under the broom tree near Beersheba. "Cast all your care upon Him, for He cares for you" (**1 Peter 5:7**).

Even (especially?) in his despair, notice where Elijah went — to Mount Horeb (Sinai), to the Lord!

The Lord **listened** to his feelings and then showed him true power — power which could *truly* overwhelm one's senses! — a wind that broke the rocks, an earthquake, a fire.

God **redirected** Elijah and sent him back to work, but God **instructed** him, giving him a better perspective.

God responded to Elijah's two complaints: **Loneliness** (He reminded Elijah that he was *not* alone: "I have reserved seven thousand in Israel", verse 18; and he gave Elijah a companion, Elisha.) and **fear** of dying at the hands of the enemy. (Elijah became one of two individuals who did not have to die! — **2 Kings 2**; compare **Genesis 5:22**.)

David had continual pressure and anxiety, living in constant danger, both from his friends and his enemies. But God was David's Rock!

2 Samuel 22:1 Then David spoke to the Lord the words of this song, on the day when the Lord had delivered him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. ² And he said: "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; ³ The God of my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, My stronghold and my refuge; My Savior, You save me from violence. (*He basically wrote Psalm 18!*) ... ³¹ As for God, His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a **shield** to all who trust in Him. ³² "For who is God, except the Lord? And **who is a rock, except our God?** ³³ God is my **strength** and **power**, And He makes my way perfect.

Have you ever had bad people gang up on you? God was David's only help.

Psalm 94:20 Shall the throne of iniquity, which devises evil by law, Have fellowship with You? ²¹ They gather together against the life of the righteous, And condemn innocent blood. ²² **But the Lord has been my defense**, And my God **the rock of my refuge**. ²³ He has brought on them their own iniquity, And shall cut them off in their own wickedness; The Lord our God shall cut them off.

No one else can truly save us. God was David's only **hope**.

Psalm 28:1 To You I will cry, O Lord my Rock: Do not be silent to me, Lest, if You are silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit.

Ever feel let down or abandoned? God was David's only trust.

Psalm 71:1 In You, O Lord, I put my trust; Let me never be put to shame. ² Deliver me in Your righteousness, and cause me to **escape**; Incline Your ear to me, and **save** me. ³ Be my **strong refuge**, To which I may resort continually; You have given the commandment to save me, For **You are my rock and my fortress**.

Ever feel old and tired? God was David's strength and his life.

Psalm 92:12 The righteous shall flourish like a palm tree, He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon. ¹³ Those who are planted in the house of the Lord Shall flourish in the courts of our God. ¹⁴ They shall still bear fruit **in old age**; They shall be **fresh and flourishing**, ¹⁵ To declare that the Lord is upright; **He is my rock**, and there is no unrighteousness in Him.

David's trick was that during all his trials and problems, just as when his own "people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were better in soul... **David strengthened himself in the Lord** his God." — **1 Samuel 30:6**

Whatever emotions you're feeling, godly people have felt them before. ("Elijah was a man with a nature like ours," **James 5:17**.) Go to God; seek Him. Talk to Him and tell him your fears and all your thoughts. Let God be your Rock, your help, your hope, your trust, your strength and your life.

Psalm 95:1-8a Oh come, let us **sing** to the Lord! **Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation.**

Doctrinal Foundations

Text: **Ephesians 4:4-6**

List and **discuss** each of the seven "ones" in the passage.

Look for connections (and even pairings) which will help **memorize** the seven. (E.g., Two pairings and a threesome — the one **faith** defines the one **body**/church; the one **baptism** gives us the one **hope**; the three in the **trinity** go together, Lord, Spirit, Father.)

Read and study the beginnings of the church in Ephesus from **Acts 19:1-7**.

Consider the incomplete teaching they had received at the hands of Apollos (**Acts 18:24-25**).

Note that, by the end of the account, the dozen disciples had been baptized *twice*, but only once in the name of Jesus. **Identify** the significance of the statement in Ephesians 4 when Paul later writes *them* that there is "one baptism." (In other words, *only one that counts!*)

Living Rocks

Ephesians 2:19 You are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, ²⁰ having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone ²¹ in whom the whole building, being **fitted together**, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, ²² in whom **you also are being built together** for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.

Each Christian is a rock in the dwelling place — the temple — of God.

1 Peter 2:4 Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, ⁵ **you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house**, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ...

⁹ But you are a **chosen** generation, a **royal** priesthood, a **holy** nation, His own **special** people, that you may **proclaim** the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; ¹⁰ who once were not a people but are now the people of God, who had not obtained mercy but **now have obtained mercy**.

We have an **identity** and a **mission**. Work together with other Christians so that Christ can dwell in us. Make yourself spiritual. Make yourself holy. Offer spiritual sacrifices. Be special. Proclaim His praises. Appreciate His mercy and show it to others and share it with others.

James 1:21 Lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and **receive** with meekness **the** implanted **word**, which is able to save your souls. ²² But **be doers of the word**, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

Only some will be DO what Jesus says (obey). Notice the context of the “build on the Rock” passage:

Matthew 7:21 “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”

1 Peter 2:6 Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, “Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame.” ⁷ Therefore, **to you who believe, He is precious;**

but to those who are disobedient, “The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,” ⁸ and “A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.” **They stumble, being disobedient to the word.**

Invitation Thoughts (combined):

Live for Jesus. “Render not to any other what alone the Lord’s should be” — i.e., your time, energy, work, love, etc.

Build NOW; your life is a vapor.

James 4:14 What is your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.

Psalm 90:12 Teach us to number our days, That we may gain a heart of wisdom.

There is only ONE ROCK. So, there are only two options: Narrow path, broad path. Life, destruction. Rock, sand.

Respond like Elijah: Express your feelings, then listen to God and obey Him.

Respond like David: Trust in the Lord alone, worship Him, and strengthen yourself in the Lord.

Start building! Keep building!

Related Songs

My Hope Is Built

I will call upon the Lord

The Rock of my Heart

A Shelter in the Time of Storm

The Rock That is Higher than I

Rock of Ages

How Firm a Foundation

You Are My Strength

Unto Thee, O Lord