

027 - Building On the Foundation - Ephesians 2:21 - 2014-11-30

Call to Worship: Psalm 24:4-5

Scripture Reading: 1 Samuel 12:20-24

Sermon: "Building On the Foundation" Ephesians 2:21; 1 Cor 3:10-13

Benediction: 3 John 1:2-4

Ephesians 2:20-22 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.

INTRODUCTION

Last time we studied the truth that God's church has been built on its foundation. Today we take up the next concept in this passage, which is that the church still is being built on its foundation.

The ongoing work of building the church on its foundation is a work of fitting the pieces together, and so building them together into the finished building.

TEXT: Ephesians 2:20-22

BODY

The ongoing work of building the church on its foundation is a work of fitting the pieces together, and so building them together into the finished building.

- I. Building the church on its foundation is a present, on-going work
 - A. In one sense God's church is already built, past tense, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone.
 - B. In another sense God's church still is being built, present tense, on this foundation.
 1. We know that this is how a building is when it is under construction.
 - a) the foundation is laid; it has been built on that foundation
 - b) yet until finished it still is being built on that foundation
 2. This is what we see here in these verses
 - a) past tense, already done
 - (1) verse 20: "having been built"
 - b) present tense, still being done
 - (1) verse 21: "being fitted together"
 - (2) verse 22: "being built together"

- II. The ongoing work of building the church on its foundation is a work of fitting the pieces together so they grow into a building
 - A. The process is expressed in two terms
 - 1. verse 21 “being fitted together”
 - a) hear the various translations
 - (1) ESV: being joined together
 - (2) NIV: is joined together
 - (3) KJV: fitly framed together
 - (4) NASB: being fitted together
 - b) hear the Greek word: this is all one word, with prefix *sun*
 - 2. verse 22 “are being built together”
 - a) ESV, NIV, NASB: same KJV: are builded together
 - b) in the Greek this also is all one word, with prefix *sun*
 - B. The outcome is expressed in two terms
 - 1. verse 21 “being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord”
 - 2. verse 22 “being built together for a dwelling place of God”
 - C. Think of how this works
 - 1. each stone must be fitted on its bottom side so that it lies solidly on the foundation beneath it
 - 2. each stone must be fitted on its other sides so that it lies firmly against the other stones
 - 3. actually a stone not well fitted on its bottom side won’t fit well against the others in its rank even if its sides are well fitted
 - 4. the work of fitting must all be done to accord with the foundation, especially the cornerstone: level, plumb, square
- III. Building the church on its foundation by the work of fitting the pieces together is metaphorical; what is this work expressed in plain language?
 - A. Fitting together is teaching
 - 1. fitting to the foundation is teaching to believe in Jesus Christ
 - 2. fitting to the other blocks is teaching to love your fellow Christians
 - B. Think how basic teaching is in God’s church
 - 1. Great commission: “teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you”
 - C. Think how much teaching encompasses
 - 1. words spoken
 - 2. example set
 - D. Think what kinds of teaching there are
 - 1. teaching yourself
 - 2. teaching unofficially
 - 3. teaching officially
 - a) mothers
 - b) fathers
 - c) pastors and teachers

- E. Teaching that fits the members of God's church together must accord with what has been taught by Jesus Christ through His prophets and apostles
1. metaphor: the foundation sets what is level, plumb, and square; all fitting of stones together must be done according to that foundation
 2. plain: Jesus, His prophets, His apostles, taught what actually is true and right; all teaching must be done according to the truth about Jesus Christ as laid down by His apostles and prophets
 3. to be well fitted to Christ, to rest firmly on Him, you must be taught what is true about Him, and that He is entirely trustworthy
 - a) who He is
 - b) what He has done: died, buried, rose again!
 - c) what He is doing now
 - d) what He has promised to do in the future
 4. to be well fitted to your fellow Christians, you must be taught what is true about your relationship with them
 - a) that we are to love one another as Christ loves the church, and to serve one another in love
 - b) that we are to walk by the Spirit, not by the flesh, in all our dealings with one another
 - c) that we are to walk in an orderly way,
 - (1) each person doing what is the duty of every Christian
 - (a) work hard with his own hands
 - (b) submit to proper authorities
 - (2) each person doing what is the duty of his particular station
 - (a) child toward parents
 - (b) parents toward children
 - (c) husband toward wife
 - (d) wife toward husband
 - (e) pastors toward church
 5. our faith in Jesus Christ must be as He really is
 6. our obedience to Jesus Christ must be to what He really commanded
 7. our worship of Jesus Christ must be as He really ordained
- F. Teaching that is not in accord with the foundation causes the stones not to fit well together
1. wrong teaching about dealing with your fellow Christians causes you not to be well fitted to them
 2. wrong teaching about Christ causes you not to be well fitted to Him
 3. wrong teaching about Christ causes you not to be well fitted to other Christians
 - a) metaphorically: a stone cut to fit the stones next to it will not fit them well if it doesn't fit the stones below it

- b) literally: if you have been taught to love your fellow Christians, but you have been taught strange things about the Lord Jesus Christ, you will not be well fitted to your brothers and sisters
 - (1) “you must do this” but Christ did not command that
 - (2) “you must not do this” but Christ did not prohibit that
- IV. So, then, let every worker be careful how he builds! 1 Cor 3:10b let each one take heed how he builds on it
 - A. be careful what example you set
 - B. be careful what you teach informally, unofficially
 - C. be cautious about taking on official teaching responsibility
 - D. be cautious about what you teach officially
- V. Let every stone be careful how he is fitted
 - A. be eager to be fitted
 - B. be cautious that you are being fitted correctly
 - 1. especially to Christ
 - 2. also to one another
 - C. be careful regarding who teaches officially: teachers should be chosen very carefully

The ongoing work of building the church on its foundation is a work of fitting the pieces together, and so building them together into the finished building.

Paul Bayne:

whatsoever is to be believed, it must have prophetic and apostolic authority . . .
whatsoever the church or house of God believeth, it must be the doctrine of the prophets and apostles. . . he doth not say, ye are builded on men, or on traditions of men, or on opinions, but on that which the prophetic and apostolic doctrine hath revealed unto you.

JRY:

when we teach others, we must be very careful what we teach

when we learn, we must be very careful what we learn

- very eager to learn the truth

- very cautious against error

What will make us not fit together well?

- contention rather than service

- lack of love (which smooths and binds)

- insistence on faulty doctrine

- trying to add non-apostolic doctrine or commands to the foundation

if I teach something in God's church that is not true, the church is not joined together by it, but disjointed by it

see from the tense that this is a process presently ongoing (Poole notes this)

from verse 20

Bayne:

The second principal thing is this, viz, that whatsoever is to be believed, it must have prophetic and apostolic authority; or thus, whatsoever the church or house of God believeth, it must be the doctrine of the prophets and apostles. . . he doth not say, ye are builded on men, or on traditions of men, or on opinions, but on that which the prophetic and apostolic doctrine hath revealed unto you.

the pope and his clergy . . . rob the sense of scripture, suffer not themselves to be ruled by it. They think the Scriptures not of absolute necessity. . . they have a spirit teaching them, out of this written scripture, the foundation of our faith

They [the apostles] writ . . . from their office . . . The absolving of it [their office] did cease all extraordinary instruments.

the authority of antique tradition is so forcible, that it beguiled some of the fathers, drawing them to use some ceremonies utterly ungrounded in the word.

But how did Tertullian then shew that traditions were not to be regarded which were beside the authority of the word, in matters of faith and manners? Even thus. The apostles were sent by Christ; if therefore they did not publish things faithfully, either

they were unable or not sincere, and Christ blame-worthy that would send those so qualified.

Be not then deceived with things after the traditions of men.

we should not receive anything because men affirm it, nor deny anything in this regard simply because great clerks are of other judgment (though we must not on the other extrememe pass by antiquity and modern judgments upon a self-willed fancy, as they were not to be heeded)

To confute unwritten words: they came neither from prophets nor apostles, therefore are to be rejected.

The word written is now in the place of the lively voice.

Where do shepherds feed? Is it not in their faster's walk? With what in hard weather, but with their master's store? So must we lead them to those green pastures, feed them with the wholesome word

1 Cor 3:10 another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it.

Geneva:

Now he speaks to the teachers themselves, who succeeded him in the church of Corinth, and in this regard to all that were after or will be pastors of congregations, seeing that they succeed into the labour of the apostles,

he warns them first that they do not persuade themselves that they may build after their own fantasy, that is, that they may propound and set forth anything in the Church, either in matter, or in type of teaching, different from the apostles who were the chief builders.

JFB:

Here the building or superstructure raised on Christ the "foundation," laid by Paul (1Co_2:2) is not, as in Eph_2:20, Eph_2:21, the Christian Church made up of believers, the "lively stones" (1Pe_2:5), but the doctrinal and practical teaching which the teachers who succeeded Paul, superadded to his first teaching; not that they taught what was false, but their teaching was subtle and speculative reasoning, rather than solid and simple truth.

Gill:

another minister of the Gospel is meant, as Apollos, or any other who might follow him, and be a means of carrying on the building upon the foundation he had laid; and of

edifying and establishing souls upon it; and of rearing up superstructure truths, upon the foundation

that he builds by line, evenly, according to the analogy of faith; that he builds in proportion to the foundation; and lays such things upon it as are becoming it, and suitable to it.

Clarke:

Let him take care that the doctrines which he preaches be answerable to those which I have preached; let him also take heed that he enjoin no other practice than that which is suitable to the doctrine, and in every sense accords with it.

in whom . . . grows

Ferguson (as others):

growth in grace of the individual members and
growth by addition of new members

the whole building

Poole:

whatsoever is built on Christ the foundation, and so all particular believers, as the several parts of the building

Bayne:

giveth both teacher and people to consider of Christian instruction

being fitted together ESV: being joined together NIV: is joined together KJV: fitly framed together NASB: being fitted together

this is all one word, with prefix *sun*

Ferguson:

1. the whole edifice and all its parts are firmly joined "in him," that is, in Christ the foundation, to wit, by faith; their life being framed according to his prescript and example (Mat 11:29), and their faith embracing him, according as he is held forth in the word, without addition or diminution

2. all the parts of this edifice are strongly joined together among themselves by the grace of love (Col 3:14), and orderly situate, every one acting towards the good of another in their several stations

a great part of the strength and beauty of the church, and of all its parts, consisteth in this conjunction and proportion; and nothing is more uncomely than for a believer to be disproportioned unto Christ, either in his faith, or practice, and to other believers in his coldrife affection to them, or his not acting orderly in his station for their good

Trapp (Calvin, Poole, Henry similar):

joined together by the cement of the Holy Spirit, working in the saints faith in Christ and love one toward another, which the apostle calleth the bond of perfection

are being built together ESV, NIV, NASB: same KJV: are builded together
this also is all one word, with prefix *sun*

Calvin:

all who are fitly framed together in Christ are the temple of the Lord. There is first required a fitting together, that believers may embrace and accommodate themselves to each other by mutual intercourse; otherwise there would not be a building, but a confused mass. The chief part of the symmetry consists in unity of faith. Next follows progress, or increase. Those who are not united in faith and love, so as to grow in the Lord, belong to a profane building, which has nothing in common with the temple of the Lord.

holy temple

Hodge:

A temple is a building in which God dwells. Such a temple is holy, as sacred to him. It belongs to him, is consecrated to his use, and can neither be appropriated by any other, nor used for anything but his service, without profanation. This is true of the church as a whole, and of all its constituent members. The moneychangers of the world cannot, with impunity, make the church a place of traffic, or employ it in any way

to answer their sordid or secular ends. The church does not belong to the state, and cannot lawfully be controlled by it. It is "sacred," set apart for God. It is his house in which he alone has any authority.

in whom you also

Henry (as Poole, Gill, Carroll):

Not only the universal church is called the temple of God, but particular churches

RWP:

Ye Gentiles also

Clarke:

ye are all, both believing Jews and Gentiles

Hodge (as Ellicott, Ferguson):

you Ephesians are builded together with other believers

Carroll:

Let the reader particularly note that the church as an institution, whether called "one new man," "one body," "one commonwealth," "one household," or "one temple," finds expression in "each several building" or particular congregation, and that the leading idea of its mission is to become a habitation of God through the Spirit.

are being built together . . . in the Spirit

Calvin:

It is, I think, an exhortation to the Ephesians to grow more and more in the faith of Christ, after having been once founded in it, and thus to form a part of that new temple of God, the building of which through the gospel was then in progress in every part of the world.

Poole:

the building of them into a temple to be the operation of the Spirit, working that faith and love in them whereby they are united to Christ the foundation, and to the several parts of the building.

Clarke:

Traditions and legends are not apostolic doctrines, and showy ceremonies are not the life of God in the soul of man.

Religion has no need of human ornaments or trappings; it shines by its own light, and is refulgent with its own glory. Where it is not in life and power, men have endeavored to produce a specious image, dressed and ornamented with their own hands. Into this God never breathed, therefore it can do no good to man, and only imposes on the ignorant and credulous by a vain show of lifeless pomp and splendor. This phantom, called true religion and the Church by its votaries, is in heaven denominated vain superstition; the speechless symbol of departed piety.

Ferguson:

ordinary ministers are employed in the preaching of Jesus Christ, as he is revealed in Scripture, to build up the elect upon the foundation which was laid by them