

Sunday January 03rd 2010.

BOB x01: Building Outreach Belonging.

JESUS the only Foundation. READ 1 Corinthians 3: 9b – 11(p207)

“You are God’s building....”

Bridge from 2009 into 2010.

Last year we focussed in on Discipleship – following Jesus, becoming more like Jesus in the things we value and the way we choose to live. We ended the year (through Advent and Christmas) thinking about hope- that is hope based upon the Resurrection of Jesus and the plan of God to bring his Kingdom in by making a new heaven and earth out of the old one and also by resurrecting human beings who have trust in him and are obedient to him.

So this year’s theme is very much a continuation of lasts. We are attempting to build upon the foundations of last year’s teaching – we will not re-lay the same foundations in detail but build further. (*Hebrews 6: 1 – 3*). (p279)

2010 BOB: Building, Outreach, Belonging.

These 3 key aspects of following God and seeking to be ready for God to use us each day and get us ready for the future “rely upon” one another and can’t be dealt with in isolation.

We begin by looking at Foundations: what has already happened. We need that sense of history – awareness that what God is doing has not just begun. We are *dwarfs standing on the shoulders of giants*. (*John of Salisbury a writer of the Middle Ages*) We come in the line of other Christian believers & theologians that we can learn & benefit from and we live and work for God in a world which is not new! There is no need to begin all over again. If you were to step out of this building and go down the steps at the front, to the right – at the cornerstone you would find an inscription:

**THIS STONE WAS LAID
JUNE 29TH 1869
BY
REVD. C.H. SPURGEON
REVD. C.D. EVANS MINISTER**

**FOR OTHER FOUNDATION CAN NO MAN LAY
THAN THAT IS LAID, WHICH IS
JESUS CHRIST. 1. COR. CHAPR. 3 VERSE 11**

The significant part is of course the Bible text from 1 Corinthians 3. (*Spurgeon and Evans* simply built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ).

There is only one true foundation for the Church of God and that is a person: Jesus Christ. But this verse infact says more than this. The only foundation for the whole of Creation and Re-creation is Jesus – God the Son.

Jesus declared that *he would build his Church and the gates of hades (death) would not stand against it. (Matthew 16: 18)*. The foundation stone of the church is believing faith in Jesus AND the foundation of all that God is doing goes back a lot further than the foundation of the Christian Church just 2,000 years ago.

Nor is OT Judaism the beginning of what God is doing – it is just some of the layers built on an earlier foundation! Some of these layers being: Solomon’s Temple (no longer visible above ground), Ezekiel’s temple (never built), The Second Temple (which stood 500 years), Herod’s Temple (begun in 19BC, finished in AD64, levelled by the Romans in AD70). (see footnote)

Paul when he writes to the Ephesian Christians talks about a plan that was drawn and laid before the foundation of the World – before creation itself.

*Before the foundation (katabalee – metaphorically of a foundation) of the world God had already chosen us to be his through our union with Christ, so that we would be holy and without fault before him. Because of his love God had already decided that through Jesus Christ he would make us his sons and daughters – this was his pleasure and purpose. (Ephesians 1; 4,5)
This plan which God will complete when the time is right, is to bring all creation together, everything in heaven and on earth with Christ as head. (1:10)*

The foundation of all that God is doing is the person Jesus Christ. Through his death and resurrection God will draw all of creation, including human beings through faith to himself.

No other person can be that true foundation.

As Paul said to the Christians at Corinth – the foundation of the Church is not himself – i.e. Paul, or Apollos who some followed or even Peter! (*) *1 Corinthians 3: 5 Paul and Apollos – are simply God’s servants.*

Peter is the “petros” (GR) or rock-man. Jesus is the foundation and Peter confesses this.

() Paul, Apollos, and Peter; this world, life and death, the present and the future – all these are yours, and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God. (1C 3: 22, 23)*

Human beings – whether they are in Corinth, Ephesus, Rome, Jerusalem, London or where ever can fall into the trap of exalting human beings – but though we should treat God’s true servants with respect – it is only Jesus who is the true foundation. If our faith, the faith of our church only rests on human beings it will not give us the stability we need to weather all that life and history throws at us. *2 Timothy 2: 19 The solid foundation that God has laid cannot be shaken...*

The people of God, are built upon the only true foundation Jesus, then foundation laid by the recognised apostles and prophets (*Ephesians 2: 19 – 22*. This we will consider later). The plan of God is also called the building of a holy temple in which God dwells by his Spirit.

Matthew 16: 16 – 20. It was Simon Peter, privately and only among the 12 who was prepared to say that he recognised that Jesus was the awaited *Messiah, and the Son of the Living God*. Jesus knows that the crowds are confused about the role of Messiah and so still wants no announcements! Jesus commended Peter (rock – stone) for being brave enough to say this out loud and also said that this knowledge was not gained by human intellect or study but as a revelation from the Father God. Jesus then went on to make plain that “heaven and earth” were not separated by some vast gap – that as they taught (“bound and loosed”, as rabbis) that the truth of what was and what wasn’t permitted would bring about God’s planned new heaven and earth closer in reality. (*The will of God being done on earth as well as heaven. Lord’s prayer*).

Peter (with all his instability of character) is the generally acknowledge leader and spokesperson of the 12 disciples. He is the first stone of many to be laid. You and I follow on as living stones in a new temple.

The NT is clear that the person of Jesus is the only foundation, but also refers to the “foundation (teachings) of the Apostles and Prophets” (*Ephesians* as above & *Revelation 21: 14*)

Jesus is going to build a Messianic Community of followers – he is not talking about erecting church buildings! Jesus is not creating an hierarchical structure with Peter at the head but laying down living stones – people who trust him as Messiah, Son of the living God. Jesus claims this community as “his”! *I will build my community!*

This community will not be shut out by hades/ death – it is a Resurrection Community! With Christ the Church will last throughout all generations, for ever and ever. *Ephesians 3: 21.*

Jesus Christ is the true foundation of all that God is doing.

Is he the foundation of our lives, our homes and households, and workplace?

Footnotes:

Foundation: the act of founding, the base of a building, the groundwork or basis.

TEMPLE: account of various OT & NT temples see New Bible Dictionary, IVP. pp 1168 – 1173.