

It is important for us to have a good foundation. If we don't have a good foundation, nothing would be able to stand. Take a house, for example. You need to build a house on a foundation, whether it be a basement or a crawlspace or a post-and pier or a slab or whatever it may be. We need to do these things so that the house has something to hold on to. Because if it didn't have it, a storm would come along and cause the whole thing to collapse. Jesus himself says in Matthew chapter 7 about a house built on a rock and a house built on sand. The house which was built on the rock is unmoving. It is something that is stable, something that's not going to fall when the storm comes, because it has something to hold on to. But the house built on sand doesn't have anything to hold on to. It just moves around and will fall when the storm comes.

And faith is the same way, Christians. Faith is something which needs a foundation, something it can hold on to. Because faith must not be like building on sand, just kind of wishing that something will happen in the future, hoping that it might happen. If our faith is like that, then it will collapse the first storm that comes. But when our faith is built on the rock, it will not fall, no matter what comes. It will stand firm, because it's standing on what is certain, standing on what is immovable. And it builds upward from there. No storm will ever be able to move that kind of faith.

And we need this firm foundation as well, Christians, when we're dealing with things that God has promised us but has not yet given us. Things that he said he's going to do in the future, but he hasn't quite done it yet. And a good example of this is what 1 Corinthians chapter 15 talks about, that is, the resurrection of the dead. Because the Corinthians were struggling with that. How could God raise the dead? How could he do this? It seems impossible. Some of them were even saying that he was never going to do it, because it just seemed too impossible. This is something that we also struggle with as well. Because it's not like we've experienced the resurrection. It's a one time thing. It will only happen once in the future, and that's it. We don't know of anyone who has risen from the dead, which may lead us to ask, how do we know that our loved ones will rise on the last day? Or maybe more to the point, how do I know that I will rise on the last day? And without some kind of foundation to hold on to, it does seem impossible. It does seem like it's something that may not happen. Maybe we can really wish that it will happen, but really wanting something to happen doesn't make it happen. We need a firm foundation. We need something we can rely on.

And Paul in our reading shows us that we have something we can rely on, a firm foundation for our faith, something that will not move, no matter what storms may come. And that foundation, Christians, is the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Because listen to what Paul says in the first two verses of our reading: "Now I would remind you, brothers, of the Gospel I preached to you, which you received, in which you stand, and by which you are being saved, if you hold fast to the word I preached to you--unless you believed in vain." So he points the Corinthians back to the Gospel. He says, "You know this already. I preached it to you. Somebody told me, and I told it to you. You already know all of these things. And this is what you need to hold on to. This is the foundation for your faith. This is what will not move in the face of every doubt."

But Paul recognizes, of course, that some of them may have believed in vain. They knew the words. They maybe even said all the right things, but in the end, they didn't really hold on to them. They didn't rely on them for their faith. It would be kind of like if you built a house on

skids or if you left a trailer house on its wheels. Yeah, it works. But it doesn't have anything to hold on to, and as soon as a good solid storm comes along, the whole thing will collapse. Because it's not good enough. It has nothing to be anchored to, nothing to hold on to. And Christians, is our faith just on skids? Is our faith something which is just sort of floating along, just kind of going along with things, but not really anchored to anything? And if that's the case, how are we going to be able to stand against doubts that come? It's kind of like Jesus said in the parable of the sower in Matthew chapter 13, where he says: "Other seeds fell on rocky ground where they did not have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, since they had no depth of soil. But when the sun rose, they were scorched, and since they had no root, they withered away." Because without that depth, they had nothing to hold on to. And as soon as the heat of the sun came upon them, they died. And a faith without a foundation is the same way. Push back against it a little, and it too will die.

What, then, is this Gospel that we need to hold on to? What is this foundation that will strengthen our faith? Paul points us to this Gospel in verses 3 and 4 of our reading: "For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures." That's it. That's the whole Gospel. Three simple points. Those three simple points are the foundation for our faith

Point one: Jesus died. But he didn't just die, because everyone knows that he died. There's nothing in that. But he died for our sins. He died to forgive us for those things that we have done against God. And more than that, he died in accordance with the Scriptures. The Bible said it would happen, and it did. It was not an accident. It was not something that just happened. It happened because God wanted it to happen. Jesus died on the cross to forgive us our sins.

Point number two: Jesus was buried. He was laid into the tomb. And that's important because he didn't just fake his death. He wasn't just pretending. Because you don't bury somebody you think only might be dead. Jesus truly died in order to forgive us our sins.

And point number three: Jesus rose on the third day. He rose to prove that we have been forgiven. Because without the resurrection, the death of Jesus means nothing, Christians. Because without the resurrection, Jesus' death is just another death. Nothing special about it. It wouldn't forgive us our sins. But with the resurrection, it is something special, something different. Because with the resurrection, we have been reconciled to God. And of course, on the other side, too, without the death of Jesus, the resurrection means nothing. Because Jesus has to die to forgive us. You can't be forgiven without blood and death. But with them both together, the death of Jesus and the resurrection of Jesus, we have been forgiven our sins. And the Bible said that this would happen too. This was not an accident. This didn't just happen. This happened as God wanted it to happen, because he gave us his Son to save us from our sins.

So that's it. That's the Gospel. Three simple points. The foundation of our faith, the solid bedrock on which it rests. But maybe we would say, is that it? It sounds a little simple. It can't be that easy. And we know this already. Shouldn't we go on to something else? Isn't there something else that we should be talking about? And yes, it is true, there is more to the Bible. After all, we have the whole Bible, which is like a house. And you don't build a house by only building the

foundation. You build all of it together. So it's all important. But without the foundation, the house cannot stand. This is the very bedrock of our faith. Think of it this way. Your own houses, if you go to the foundation, why would you inspect it? Why would you look at it again? Because you want to make sure that it's sturdy. You want to make sure there's no cracks in it. Because if there's a crack in the foundation, the whole house is in danger of falling down. And it's the same way with our faith, Christians. We come back to the foundation of our faith, because we need to have that solid foundation. We don't want any cracks in it. And so we come back again and again, being reminded of the simple Gospel truth to know that we indeed have been saved.

And so whenever doubts arise, when we are grounded on that foundation, we can answer them. How can we know that we're going to rise from the dead? Because Jesus lives. And if Jesus lives, we know that we will live with him too. And this isn't just a vague wish, either, a vague hope that this might be true. More than five hundred people saw Jesus, as Paul tells us, including Paul himself. More than five hundred people saw him alive after he was dead, and based on their testimony, we know that this is true. And we can come back to this and be strengthened by these truths, because when we hold onto that Gospel, our faith will never be shaken.

This is why we sang that great hymn: "I Know That My Redeemer Lives." It's why we sing it at Easter. It's why we sing it at funerals. And it's a good hymn to sing whenever we are struggling with doubt, because it reminds us of our foundation: that Jesus Christ is alive. As the hymn itself says: "He lives to silence all my fears; / He lives to wipe away my tears; / He lives to calm my troubled heart; / He lives all blessings to impart." "He lives, and I shall conquer death!" So hold on to that foundation, Christians. Hold on to that truth. Jesus lives! And because he lives, nothing, absolutely nothing will be able to take your joy away.

Let us pray. Lord God, heavenly Father, you have given us your Son, Jesus Christ, to forgive us our sins, and because he lives, we know that we shall live also. Help us always to trust in him, so that faced with any doubts, we may know that he lives for us. We pray in his name. Amen.