

## Be Christ's Disciple (3): Be Steadfast

### 1 Corinthians 15:58 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

*Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, **be firm, immovable**, always excelling in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

### Hebrews 12:3 New American Standard Bible (NASB)

<sup>3</sup>For **consider Him** who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will **not grow weary and lose heart**.

## Introduction

Foundations determine the fate of the building

Have you heard about the Leaning Tower of Pisa (a city in Tuscany, Central Italy)? It is the twelfth century edifice still stands today. On August 9, 1173, the foundations were laid; construction lasted for the next 199 years. As of today, the tower leans at an angle of 4 degrees. “The tower’s **tilt** began during construction, caused by **an inadequate foundation on ground** too soft on one side to properly support the structure’s weight.”  
([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leaning\\_tower\\_of\\_pisa](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leaning_tower_of_pisa))

### Why foundations?

Anyone who’s in the building business knows how critical the foundations are for the buildings. Building a house without firm foundations would be a disaster and a waste of time and money.

Why are foundations so important? Because, without foundations, no house or building will stand strong. Think of all the old cathedrals in Europe standing today. Somebody had done a great job laying foundations of those churches. Even though we cannot see the foundations from outside, every one of them has stood on firm foundations for centuries.

Why do foundations matter? Because, they support the buildings. Same thing goes with our life. We need foundations for our lives.

Everyone conducts a life. Everyone’s life is built on something, whether it’s built on principles or convictions such as education, relationships, money, fame, or ambition.

## **God the Master Builder**

But for the *ultimate* firm foundation, for the very ground on which our lives truly stand, we don't have to look further than God Himself. He is an expert architect and a master builder. He knows what we are talking about. He knows what we need for foundations of life. He has been in this business since the beginning of human history.

Here are some of His credentials just in case you wonder. God knows how to create things. He knows how to sustain them, too. He created the universe according to His brilliant design. He created the heavens and the earth (Genesis 1:1). He is the architect who laid foundations of the earth (Hebrews 1: 10). He is the architect and the builder of the City in Heaven (Hebrews 11:10). It's worth talking about Heaven here.

In Heaven, there is the Holy City (New Jerusalem) that radiates with the glory of God. The city's street is pure gold, transparent as glass. The Holy City has a great, high wall with twelve gates, and the twelve gates are twelve pearls. At the gates are twelve angels, and on the gates are inscribed the names of the twelve tribes of Israelites; on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. The wall of the city has twelve foundation stones, and on them are the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb (Revelation 21:11-14, 21).

The foundation stones of the city are adorned with every kind of precious stone (Revelation 21:19): jasper (red-yellow-brown-green), sapphire (blue), chalcedony (various colors), emerald (green), sardonyx (various), carnelian (brownish red), chrysolite (yellow-green), beryl (green-blue-yellow), topaz (blue-brown-yellow-orange), chrysoprase (green), jacinth (red), amethyst (purple). Wow!

Why am I talking about foundations this morning? Because, depending on what kind of foundations we build our lives on, in the end, we will either harvest wind (that is, nothing) or eternal life. Also, the stability of our life as believers solely relies on the foundations. God doesn't want our lives to collapse whenever adversities strike us. He wants us to be steadfast, firm, and immovable in Christ. He wants us to stay strong in our life's journey to Heaven. He wants us to be rooted and established in love, hope, and faith (Ephesians 3:17, Colossians 1:23). For that, He perfects us, confirms us, strengthens us, and establishes us in Christ (1 Peter 5:10). Of course, He begins His sanctifying work in us with the foundation.

**Who Is Our Foundation?** Jesus Christ.

Do you remember Jesus' parable on the wise and foolish builders (Matthew 7:24-27)?

<sup>24</sup> “Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts on them, will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and its collapse was great.”

Consider this: the two builders used the same materials for their houses. They had the same trouble at the same time: the torrential rain and the waves of waters. But the result was a night and day difference; one fell and the other stood. Why? All because of the foundation. The house that withstood the torrents was built well on the rock (Matthew 7:25).

That foundation is Jesus our Lord. He is the Rock in our lives. Upon Him, we build our lives as a believer (1 Corinthians 3:11). On this foundation of Jesus, we build our covenantal relationship with God. When we build our lives on Him, we will be steadfast and strong, because Jesus Himself is immovable and unchanging; we will withstand life's challenges far better than those whose foundations is not Christ.

### **Unpacking** of 1 Corinthians 15:58

*Therefore, my beloved brothers and sisters, **be firm, immovable**, always excelling in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.*

**Be firm/steadfast** (Εδραίοι): The Greek root carries the meaning of ‘support’ and ‘foundation.’ In other words, you can only be firm with a foundation. No foundation, no steadfastness. No foundation, no stability or longevity. The same goes for us. We cannot be steadfast in our worship and service without Jesus the Rock, the firm foundation, in our lives.

**Immovable** (Α-μετα-κίνητοι): Here's the breakdown of the composite word: ‘A’ (not), ‘μετα-κίνητοι’ (movable). The word ‘movable’ (‘μετα-κίνητοι’) comes from the root ‘meta-kineo’—where the English word ‘kinetic’ comes from. ‘Meta-kineo’ means ‘to move, shift, or dislodge.’ A house built on shaky foundation will be shifted and eventually fall to the ground and vice versa. A believer whose heart is rooted in Christ is immovable. A believer whose

foundation is everything else but Christ is shifting back and forth following the worldly principles.

### **Always excelling/abounding in the work of the Lord:**

There's no such a thing as retirement in the Christian vocabulary. As long as God grants us a healthy body and mind, we need to be actively engaged in the work of the Lord all the time. E.g., Professor Moffett at Princeton Theological Seminary. In 1990s, over 90 years old, he would jog a couple of miles on a treadmill and work on his book daily, well beyond his retirement age. I hope every one of us to be like him.

What's the incentive for abounding in God's work? Your labor is not in vain. There's a divine reward waiting for your labor. God remembers and will reward you for your labor. We shall reap what we have sown in due time (Galatians 6:9) if we faint not (grow weary, give up). That leads me to the next verse.

### **Unpacking of Hebrews 12:3**

<sup>3</sup>For consider Him (Jesus) who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not **grow weary** and lose heart. The Greek word for 'grow weary' here carries the meaning of being 'sick in soul,' like a spiritual flu.

**Consider Jesus:** Have you ever got discouraged after you worked so hard for the Lord? In fact, it is normal for us to get discouraged or lose heart once in a while when we are involved with God's work. E.g., *Someone said to you an insensitive word that hurt your pride. Others failed to give credits that you deserve.* The list goes on. In those moments, look to Jesus—an antidote for discouragements or burn-outs:

*You're not alone. Look to Jesus! Think about what He has been through. He went through much worse than what you are going through now.* He endured hostility by sinners. He endured all the mockery from the sinners for whom He was dying. How was He able to endure hostility and His cross? By focusing on the glory of crown. If He did it, with God's help, we can do it, too. By focusing on the glory and honor we will receive from the Lord, we can overcome temporary spiritual weariness.

### **Conclusion**

Build your life on Jesus the Rock. He will keep you immovable and steadfast. Abound in the work of the Lord and God will reward you eternally. In moments of discouragement, consider Jesus. Amen.