

BUILD ON THE FOUNDATION

Aaron Beard
Trussville
Dec 24, 2006

Introduction:

A. Before one builds a major building they always start with laying a good foundation:

1. The foundation serves as the starting point for the building, the building will rest on this foundation, & whether it is strong or weak is determined by the foundation's strength
2. For this reason most people spend a great amount of time in laying a good foundation!
3. Now, what if a person laid a good foundation and then stopped building?

B. We are building on a foundation that is far more important than the foundation of any building you can see, we are building on the foundation of Christ! (Eph 2:19-22)

1. This building that is being built is the Lord's church, His body! It's what we call the universal church – It is made up of all the saved, of all time, of all nations
2. Jesus Christ and His work is the chief cornerstone of this building, next you add onto this structure the apostles and their work – A sure foundation to be built upon
3. This "Holy Temple" has been in the process of being built upon ever since the resurrection of Christ and the day of Pentecost... and as souls turn away from the world and unto the Lord and then grow in Christ this temple continues to be built upon

C. We are also striving to build upon a foundation here at this church:

1. We are certainly striving to build onto the foundation of Christ through the converting of lost souls and the edification of the saints who make of that spiritual building
2. But on a smaller, but still very important level, we are striving to build upon our spiritual foundation here at this church through growth – but individually and collectively
3. The elders have said, and I believe it is true, that we have a good foundation to build upon here! Now is the time for us to arise and build upon this foundation! (Neh 2:18; 4:6)

I. A Failure To Build On The Foundation:

A. Haggai was given one simple message: Resume Building On The Foundation!

1. The children of Israel began to rebuild the temple; however, they were met with opposition from their adversaries and the work stopped! (Ezra 3:8-10; 4:23-24)
 - a. Judah had been carried into Babylonian captivity... In time Cyrus, a Medo-Persian king, captured Babylon and his empire took over. He was a benevolent king who allowed the Jews to return & rebuild Jerusalem – Happened in 3 phases
 - b. As they get the foundation of the temple laid their adversaries get the king to give them the authority to stop the work... They come in by force and stop the work and for sixteen years all that there was of God's temple was a foundation!
 - c. It was with this background that God raised up both Haggai and Zechariah to prophesy to the people to get them to start the work on the temple again
2. The people of God had drifted into a state of spiritual indifference: (Haggai 1:2-4)
 - a. They were dwelling in paneled houses... Evidently the people were experiencing a some wealth & built nice luxurious homes, but God's house was still in ruins!
 - b. Their paneled homes weren't wrong, but their lackadaisical spiritual attitude and misplaced priorities were! Materialism had crept in & they became indifferent!
 - c. Surely they made great excuses for their lack of care – "Last time we tried to build they were attacked! We've been in captivity for seventy years, surely it's okay to take a break and enjoy life! We need to establish ourselves physically first!"
 - d. God took this problem seriously... He distances themselves from them calling them "This people" instead of "My people" – They weren't acting like God's people!
3. To their spiritual indifference God message is simple: "Consider Your Ways" (Hag. 1:5-7)
 - a. Because of their lack of spiritual interest God punishes them physically... Their crops, their food & drink, & their money weren't enough to sustain their needs
 - b. Too, they had a degree of wealth because they lived in prosperity, but it was empty wealth! Something was missing in their lives... They ignored the spiritual side
 - c. Remember, one reason they weren't building the temple was they feared being

- oppressed, yet due to spiritual indifference they lived like they were oppressed
- d. All their troubles were happening to them as a wake up call! Consider your ways!
4. Following this rebuke God just says, "Go get to work!" and they do! (**Verses 8-11**)

B. When they finally began to build again on this foundation there were some who were yet discouraged in what they saw taking place:

1. There was an older generation present who remembered that what they saw being built was not exactly like the good old days! (**Ezra 3:12**)
 - a. Talk about a mixed reaction! As the foundation was being laid some were rejoicing and some weeping... the mixture was so great you couldn't tell the two apart
 - b. The line between the two reactions seems to be drawn by the age of the people... Those who were older remembered the glory of the older temple and wept!
2. Haggai saw this and tried to encourage the people! (**Haggai 2:3-9**)
 - a. Haggai knows that those who saw the temple built during the days of Solomon would look at this temple and see it as nothing... like it won't compare!
 - b. They're to be encouraged & not be afraid... This would be great since God and His Spirit would be with them & since He had plans for great glory in their future!
3. Haggai wanted them to look forward to a day when God would "shake things up" and fill His temple with glory... Fulfilled under the reign of Christ (**Heb 12:26**)

II. Now, Let Us Rise Build:

A. A great foundation has been laid for growth both personally & collectively at this church!

1. A great foundation has been laid by the spiritual leaders of the past (**Hebrews 13:7**)
 - a. I did not know any of these people personally; however, I know they must have been strong faithful servants of God from what many of you have said
 - b. If these people spoke God's word to you and had a faith that you could follow... Then imitate them in Christ, recalling the foundation of faith they laid in you!
 - c. But don't get stuck living in the past! Yes, they laid a great foundation to be built upon... we need strong spiritual leaders today to lay this foundation for others!
2. We have appointed elders and deacons to serve this church (**Eph 4:11-16**)
 - a. What a great foundation this is to build & grow upon! If they do their job and we do our job things will flow much smoother & an atmosphere for growth is created!
 - b. God gave us the various roles to be filled within a local church for a purpose, not just so they could grow, but so we ALL, the WHOLE body, can grow together!
 - c. Their work, along with all the other servants here at this church, are laying a great foundation for unity, personal & collective growth, and an increase in love
3. We have level of love, commitment, and closeness between the members here that you do not find in many churches – big or small! (**Rom 12:9-11**)
 - a. When people attend at Trussville this is one of the things they notice... several have commented, "That group cares about one another and it really shows!"
 - b. Good foundation to help each other in life's difficult moments, correct one another when wrong, and encourage one another to be strong in the Lord!
4. We've got Bible classes & other opportunities to grow & grow spiritually: (**Heb 5:12-6:2**)
 - a. Our teachers put a lot of work into our classes... We've had good classes here!
 - b. A good foundation for your growth! Their work is meant for you to use a foundation for your personal growth... And a good foundation for you to step up & teach!
 - c. And as more interest is shown among the members in studies and special opportunities to do spiritual things, more will certainly be provided!

B. To those who have been here many years... Don't be afraid or anxious about changes that have been made but look to the future glory and rise and build!

1. Think about some of the changes that have occurred over the past few years:
 - a. There have been changes in leadership: One who preached here for years left and new preacher came then elders and deacons were appointed to serve
 - b. Changes in members – Some have left and others have come in, we have seen

- people obey the gospel, and some who were gone on to be with the Lord
- c. Other changes have taken place that may be more physical in nature and more will come in the near & distant future – Song books, projector, building upgrades
2. Just like what Haggai, Zerrubbabel, and Ezra had to deal with, some here may look at changes and be slow to embrace them:
 - a. While some may look at changes, while scriptural, and meet them joy and excitement as we build on our foundation others may be saddened by them
 - b. They remember “the good old days” and wish things were the way they used to be
 - c. A church’s past can be a great hindrance – Some are driven by the past and are unable to look to the glory that can await by pressing on toward the future!

C. Remember that a good foundation is nothing if we don’t build upon it!

1. We must battle against spiritual indifference that stops the work in the Lord’s kingdom!
 - a. The same thing that kept the Jews from finishing the temple keeps God’s people from growing today personally and collectively... A lack of care!
 - b. Why don’t Christians study God’s word more? Live more moral lives? Teach others more? Attend more faithfully? It’s a failure to love God enough!
 - c. As we said recently – The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart!
2. The problems can stem from the same problems that Haggai dealt with:
 - a. It may be that some have attempted to be more faithful and grow more but faced opposition when they did... so they gave up & God’s house lies in ruins!
 - b. It may be that it lies in misplaced focus and priorities – We look up and wonder why aren’t built up like we should be (numerically & in our faith) and yet we are keep putting other things ahead of God & refusing to set aside sin in our life!
3. Whatever is the case, if you are not growing as you should and you are not building on the foundation that is laid here and in your life... **CONSIDER YOUR WAYS!**
4. As we think about the foundations laid before us, let us mimic the attitude of the children of Israel when Nehemiah inspired them to rise and build! **(Nehemiah 2:18; 4:6)**