

# Build To Last

Jesus is the fixed point for your focus.  
Jesus is the solid foundation for your labor.  
Jesus is the constant vision for your hope.

**1 Corinthians 3:7-15** <sup>7</sup> So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. <sup>8</sup> Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor. <sup>9</sup> For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. <sup>10</sup> According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. <sup>11</sup> For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. <sup>12</sup> Now if anyone builds on this foundation *with* gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, <sup>13</sup> each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. <sup>14</sup> If anyone's work which he has built on *it* endures, he will receive a reward. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

One of the first things my driver instructor taught me was to keep my eyes up on the road ahead. If you are looking at the road right in front of the car you will tend to swerve back and forth. If you watch the center line, you will tend to drift towards the center. If you are watching the side of the road you will tend to drift towards the side. Keep your eyes up on the road ahead to stay straight in your lane.

Similarly, if you are lost it is easy to walk in circles unless there is some fixed point you can see in the distance. People lost in the woods without a good view of a distant goal have a tendency to walk in circles. The thing about circles is that you can walk, you can run, you can exert all your energy and end up exhausted at the end of the day, but you have accomplished nothing. You will be right back where you started.

You need that fixed point. You need to be able to see that goal and keep your eyes on it in order to make sure your labor, your energy isn't wasted. Otherwise, all the effort you exert is simply going in circles not accomplishing anything.

For those of you starting or continuing your ministry today, for us as a church, that fixed point is Jesus Christ. If you keep your eyes firmly fixed on Jesus, you will not be swerving back and forth. If you keep your eye on Jesus, your work will not prove to be worthless.

As saint Paul reminds us in his first epistle to the Corinthians:

**1Co 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.**

Paul uses a different analogy in our text but to the same point. Christ is the foundation. There is no other foundation. Really a better translation would be there is no greater or no better foundation than Jesus Christ.

In 600 BC the Romans weren't the first to invent concrete but they were the first to make widespread use of it in their architecture and much of what they built remains today. 2,000 years later cement remains the key to a solid foundation.

So too with Christ, Paul is reminding us, there are many other foundations that are proposed to replace Christ but none of them provides the solid foundation that can last. The foundation of Rome's architecture was strong and solid and remains. But their society, their empire does not. It was not built on Christ.

If we would build something to last Christ is the only foundation that will accomplish that.

John the Baptist, who himself was to prepare the way for Jesus, when he saw Jesus, what did he say?

**Joh 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**

By this he meant the disciples to understand, "There is Jesus. Behold Him. Look to Him. Keep your eyes fixed on Him. Build your life on Him. Leave me and follow Him."

John's disciples didn't get the hint and the next day John had to tell them again. What are you still doing here, "Behold, there is the Lamb of God."

**1Pe 4:11 If anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God. If anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen.**

It is not enough to build. It is not enough to work. Endless energy can be wasted on useless endeavors. I knew a man in India who spent a great deal of money and time shaping and forming bricks, but he had no money left to heat the bricks. The bricks sat there for a long time until it rained, and they all turned into mud. All that time and money was wasted.

It is not enough that your students pass their tests. It is not enough that they do well on the standardized tests. Our goal is not to impress the bureaucrats of this world. It is not enough that they get good jobs and make lots of money. If they are not built on the foundation of Jesus Christ they building will not last.

Some of you this day have been charged with the ministry of Christ. All of you have been called to be the people of God. Labor like John the Baptist so that everything you do points to Jesus. Behold the Lamb of God. Build so that everything you build is laid on the foundation of Jesus. Live with your eyes always fixed on Jesus.

### **What is it that you need? What is it that is necessary to be a good worker in God's kingdom?**

Elisha knew that Elijah was about to go to heaven. Elisha knew that soon preaching and teaching God's word would be his job. He wanted to do that job well. What did he ask of God? He asked that he could have a "double portion of Elijah's spirit." Whatever Elijah did, Elisha wanted to do it twice as good. Preach the word twice as good as those who came before. That's a good goal.

What do you need to accomplish this? What did God give Elisha?

Did God send him down a giant bag of gold from heaven? No. Money is helpful but it doesn't make you a better teacher.

Did God give Elisha a brand new smart board? This hasn't been invented yet but here you go Elisha it will really help you teach. No.

Did he give him "phenomenal cosmic powers?" No

What did God give him? Only this that he saw Elijah ascend bodily in the whirlwind into heaven. This was the token of the promise God gave to him. The rest of his life Elisha had that vision, the memory of that event. Elisha knew this is the end of those who serve the Lord. This is where I too will go. He had that vision to lead him on, to encourage him when the way was wearisome, or dark, or long.

Elisha's eyes from the very beginning of his ministry were firmly fixed on heaven and the salvation that is the free gift through Jesus Christ.

You have a greater sight than Elisha had. You haven't see Elijah ascend into heaven. You have seen Jesus rise from the dead and ascend. You haven't seen a whirlwind and a fiery chariot. You have seen an empty tomb, a glorified Lord, the gates of heaven, the crystal sea, the trees of life which stand before the throne of Christ and the Lamb who was slain and now lives.

Through what Elisha saw God promised him a double spirit, through what you have seen God has poured out on you an even greater portion.

A pastor friend once told me that a family asked him not to do a certain funeral because they knew he would make it all about Jesus. What a compliment. Let it be known about you that you will always make it all about Jesus.

Always point to Christ and your labor will not be in vain. Build on Christ and your energy will not be wasted. Look to Christ and you will not be lost.

**2 Corinthians 8:9 <sup>9</sup> For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich.**