

Foundation for the New Year

Deuteronomy 31:1-8

PW Emerson – 01/05/2020 – Ten:27 Ministries

It's appropriate that Christmas is at the end of our calendar.

It sets up the foundation for the year to come.

This morning, I want to look at the foundation stone upon which to build the new year.

Deuteronomy 31:1-8

Then Moses went out and spoke these words to all Israel: ²"I am now a hundred and twenty years old and I am no longer able to lead you. The LORD has said to me, 'You shall not cross the Jordan.' ³The LORD your God himself will cross over ahead of you. He will destroy these nations before you, and you will take possession of their land. Joshua also will cross over ahead of you, as the LORD said. ⁴And the LORD will do to them what he did to Sihon and Og, the kings of the Amorites, whom he destroyed along with their land. ⁵The LORD will deliver them to you, and you must do to them all that I have commanded you. ⁶Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

⁷Then Moses summoned Joshua and said to him in the presence of all Israel, "Be strong and courageous, for you must go with this people into the land that the LORD swore to their ancestors to give them, and you must divide it among them as their inheritance. ⁸The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged."

Most Christians are familiar with the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5-7.

It contains LOTS of sayings that have become quite familiar to many people ...

- The Beatitudes (Matthew 5)
- You are the salt of the earth (Matthew 5:13)
- Let your light shine (Matthew 5:14)
- Love your enemies (Matthew 5:44)
- When you give to the needy, do not let your right hand know what your left hand is doing (Matthew 6:3)
- Do not judge (Matthew 7:1)
- Ask and it will be given to you (Matthew 7:7)

These are all good.

Notice it ends with the Parable of the Foolish man and the Wise man

- The foolish man built his house on sand
- The wise man built his house on the rock

The house built on the rock was able to weather the storms

Often it is interpreted to build you life on Christ – for salvation.

Only with Christ can we weather storms of this world and reach heaven.

But that's actually not what it is teaching.

What Jesus is saying is that **obedience to the words he has spoken** is like building your life on the rock.

To be on a solid footing, we need to build our house on obedience to God's words.

That's why John 5:39

³⁹You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me

That's important for us to remember because salvation through Jesus Christ is not JUST about the all important heaven waiting for us when we die.

It's also about what we are doing in the meantime!

As we are on our journey, we are to build something for God!

With that in mind ... think about your life, your house.

- is your house feeling shabby in relation to your obedience and how you glorify Christ and His teachings in your life?
- is your house worse than shabby, derelict, that you're ashamed of?

Will your time this year be for Christ's glory?

Remember I Corinthians 10:31

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Thinking to what we will build this year, Deuteronomy 31:1-8 is a good place to start as we think about the foundation we will build on this coming year.

Let me give some background

- The nation of Israel had been promised to Abraham and to Jacob
- And Abraham had been promised that they would be given a land flowing with milk and honey – good things
- Moses came along and he was given the law or instruction from God to give to the people. Thus we have the first 5 books of the bible
- The people were to follow the law or instruction as a way to live (now you see why instruction is a better translation)
- Because of the rebellion, not following God's words, the people got to the promised land decades later than they should have

Now, the people are on the cusp of entering the promised land.

Moses is leaving the picture – he would not enter the promised land.

The piece we are looking at are his parting words.

He could have said something to the affect ...

- Shape up or you'll keep wandering around the wilderness for years longer
- Shape up or you'll never receive God's blessings.
- Following God's words will is the smart thing to do
- Look at everything God has done for you – why wouldn't you want to follow him??!

But that's not what Moses said.

Moses was trying to encourage the people, Joshua, who would succeed him, and the people of Israel.

Moses is reminding them that God said he would be with them ALL THE WAY!
And God is faithful and God will follow through on what he said!

Moses is telling the people then AND us today, that

- No matter how much we have messed up
- No matter how much of a failure we feel like

God has made a covenant with his people.

And God will see it through to the end!

Not only will God be with us, God will go before us!

Deuteronomy 31:8

“The LORD himself **goes before you** and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.”

Remember when God was leading the people in the wilderness for 40 years, HE LED THEM

- Pillar of cloud by day
- Pillar of fire by night

Exodus 13:21

God went before them

God will go before us into the new year.

God said the same thing in Deuteronomy 9:3

³But be assured today that the LORD your God is the one who goes across ahead of you like a devouring fire. He will destroy them; he will subdue them before you. And you will drive them out and annihilate them quickly, as the LORD has promised you.

When going into the promised land, God will go first and clear out the way!

When going where God wants us to go, God will first and set the way!

God will go where we are going this year

God will prepare the way.

That should be great encouragement for us all!

Romans 8:31

³¹What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?

That is critical for us because too often we feel like God is “up there” or “watching over.”

Rather, we need to remember Philippians 4:5

Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near.

That’s so critical for us to remember that I am going to text it to everyone here, everyday this week!

That’s a critical part of our foundation for the new year.

In this piece from Deuteronomy 31, Joshua is being told, it's your turn.

Joshua, you've done well

- As a follower
- As an example
- Being obedient to God's word

Now, it's time for you to lead

We see the same in Matthew 28:19-20

¹⁹Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.

Jesus is telling his disciples to go make more disciples.

Disciples were meant to have other disciples.

For you and I today ...

If we are disciples of Christ, we are to go make more disciples

NOT converts, but believers, taking action, obedient to God's word, going out to make more disciples.

God says to you and I ...

- You have been a good follower
- You have been a good example

- You have been obedient to God's word

Now, it's time for you to lead

Joshua knew it would not be easy

But he was determined to be obedient to God.

What about us?

Rev John Maxwell said

A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way

God leads us.

And God tells us to go find others and lead them to him!

Too many people look to the pastor of the church, whatever church, as the main focus of God's ministry. However, the church is not about the pastor. It's about God, God's Word, reaching the people and the people taking it up.

Illustration

There were two women in their early 20's who loved Jesus very much. They had just begun to visit a new church in town. The church was a very exciting place: the gifts of the spirit were in operation, the pastors seemed to be caring individuals, praise and worship was awesome! but much work needed to be done. The two young women volunteered their time and talents for the work of the Lord. The church began to grow, and so did the work load of these two individuals. Before long, their labors of love became expected by the pastor. The

care and concern that these women had once felt from the leaders was gone. Instead, the demands for their efforts increased to keep the pastor pleased. What's more, they were afraid to decline to perform duties because they had seen the outcome of members who had tried.

The pastor ruled over the congregation with much control, manipulation, fear tactics and guilt mechanisms to keep the people "in line" or doing what he wished. The pastor was there to be served, not to serve. It took one of the young women 3 years to reach burn out and almost had a nervous breakdown. The other, 4 years. Eventually they both left that church.

The church is not about the pastor.

It's about each individual, listening to God and acting, being obedient to God.

I'll admit, I get excited when people hear about that the church is able to do!

- Oil Change
- Thanksgiving Baskets
- Sandwiches for the homeless
- And more

And I take every opportunity to tell them it's as simple as following God's Word!

Then I tell them ... as exciting as that is, I get exciting thinking about what God will bring up next!!

- God plants an idea in you to reach out to the people in this trailer park
- God give you a vision about this group of people, getting energized as a community centered around God

I don't know what God has planned next, but I will

- Be excited

- Be obedient
- And embrace it!

Here is our anthem for the new year.

Isaiah 61:1-2

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,
because the LORD has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,
to proclaim freedom for the captives
and release from darkness for the prisoners,
to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor
and the day of vengeance of our God,
to comfort all who mourn

Let's say it together!