

# Building Upon the Foundation of Christ

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Mike Baird

## Intro

- Jennifer and chicken coop foundation

My daughter Jennifer wanted a to raise some chickens for the eggs and to give her daughter Ivy some responsibility by taking care of them. It was too expensive to buy a coop and so my daughter asked me to build one for her. I said sure and spent a week at her house to do so. She had a spot picked out that required we remove the lawn to build the coop. About a 6' x 12' spot. I was amazed when I cut the grass with a sheetrock saw that it pulled right up quite easily. It was easy to see why though. The lawn was just sod laid on top of sand! A feature of the spot was from the back-left corner to the front-right corner was a drop of about 6 inches. I told Jennifer we would have to get some gravel to lay down for a foundation, building up the low spots with the gravel to make the foundation level. Jennifer looked at me and said (because of her concern for cost): "Can't we just scoop up the sand to build up the low corner?" I looked at her for a few seconds and did something I don't think I have ever done before in answering a question – I began to sing: "And the foolish man built his house upon the...?". Jennifer laughed and said "sand" and then told me to get some gravel for the foundation.

## Wise man – foolish man

- Matt 7:24-27

24) Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

25) And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

26) And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them *not*, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

27) And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.



**I have thought** of this experience often in the past year

- I thought of it in the aftermath of storms that caused a loved one's house to fall
  - Storms came, the winds blew, the house fell and in the Savior's words "great was the fall of it"
  - Result was lost faith, divorce, loneliness, heartache for the person and loved ones
  
- I thought about it as I witnessed this same daughter who wanted to save money and build the chicken coop on a foundation of sand, weather the storm of not being able to have any more children. She give away the bitterness and heartache and found peace because her faith and testimony were built upon a sure foundation – faith and testimony of Christ's atonement
  
- I thought of it as I listened to the others express sorrow over loved ones and friends whose houses are teetering or has fallen
  - That is to say their testimonies are wavering or shaken or are insufficient in the face of the storms that have swirled about them
  
- I've thought about it as I contemplated how all of us go through trials of faith in one form or another
  
- This is what I will address today
- **What** is that foundation we must build on
- **How** do we build **on that** foundation
- **Continuing** to build on that foundation
  
- ***So that you and I, too, may withstand the floods and the winds that inevitably come in our lives***

## **What is it we must build our foundation on?**

- I think everyone here knows, at least intellectually the answer to that question
- Helaman to his sons Nephi and Lehi:
- Helaman 5:12

And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that ye must build your foundation; that when the devil shall send forth his mighty winds, yea, his shafts in the whirlwind, yea, when all his hail and his mighty storm shall beat upon you, it shall have no power over you to drag you down to the gulf of misery and endless wo, because of the rock upon which ye are built, which is a sure foundation, a foundation whereon if men build they cannot fall.

- Note: didn't say to build upon just any rock
- "Rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God"
- Testify
  - If we build on any other rock, or gravel, or what have you we are building on a foundation that could crumble
  - We must do as Helaman counseled his sons and build upon the rock of Jesus Christ the son of God

## Faith - Testimony

- For what I wish to convey we need to understand:
  - What is a testimony and what is faith and how are they different?
  - They are not the same thing
- **What is a TESTIMONY:**
- A testimony is something we can say or describe based on the witness we have received
- When we testify we speak of something we know because of a witness we have received about that thing
  
- **What is FAITH:**
- Faith is a belief that grows or results from these witnesses we receive
  - Prophet Joseph said faith is a result of evidence presented to the mind
  - **Hebrews 11:1**  
Now faith is the substance of things **hoped** for, the *evidence* of things not seen.
- **Simple example to illustrate:**
- Triangle of growth of faith
- If I receive a witness that God lives for example
  - I can testify that because of the witness I received I know that He lives
  - ***If I have soft heart***, then faith is generated – I have a belief or faith in God
- Faith empowers us to act not be acted upon
- Because I have gained a faith in God and believe in Him I will act
  - I will keep His commandments
  - When I do then things happen
    - Sometimes miracles
    - Always blessings
  - I get a witness of keeping that commandment
  - Which causes my faith to grow even stronger
- **However**, if we have a hard heart or do not act then we are left with a testimony but no faith
  - Laman and Lemuel are the poster children for this condition
- Over time as our faith is inactive then our Testimony will fade and we are left to be driven to and fro like a leaf on the wind

## Testimony and Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ

- We can and should have a testimony and faith in many things
- **However** the first principle of the gospel is faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
  - Not just faith, but faith in the Lord Jesus Christ
- It is no coincidence that the first two Temple recommend question are:
  - “Do you have faith in and a testimony of God the Eternal Father; His Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Ghost?”
  - “Do you have a testimony of the atonement of Christ and of his role as Savior and Redeemer?”
- A testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ is the foundation upon which our testimony must be built
  - Meaning it is the **most important it is the witness** we can receive
- The faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that results from this testimony is the faith required to build our faith on a sure foundation
  - This is a faith and testimony that empowers us, gives us strength
- A testimony and faith such that:
  - **Ephesians 4:14**  
That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;
- If we build a house on any other foundation, then the storms of life will weaken us and at some point we may fall
  - And great can be the fall there of

## How do we build this foundation?

- Helaman 5:12

And now, my sons, remember, remember that it is upon the rock of our Redeemer, who is Christ, the Son of God, that *ye must build your foundation*;

- I visualize a great big huge rock – Here is where I put the building blocks that form my foundation
- How do I gain a testimony that "THAT IS THE ROCK I MUST BUILD ON"?
- Then "HOW DO I BUILD ON IT"?

### #1 – Gain a testimony of the Book of Mormon

- In order to have the faith required to build our foundation on Christ we need a testimony of Him as I just explained
  - Of his divinity
  - Of his atonement
- How do we gain that testimony?
- Front Cover: "The Book of Mormon – Another Testament of Jesus Christ"

### My own experience

- I grew up going to church
- Like many – just believed, Parents, others
  - Never really disbelieved
- Like all of us at some point we come to that situation where we must know for ourselves
- 16 – my life was changed
- Called to be a stake missionary
- Realized if I was going to teach that the book of Mormon was true I needed to know
- I desired to know for myself
- I remember the day, the exact location
- Prayed
- "resonates deep within me"
- Foundation of my testimony
  - Because of this I know that Jesus is the Christ, God lives
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> temple recommend question

## #2 – Do what Christ taught

Christ himself told us several times how to build upon Him as the rock

- Matt 7:24-27  
24) **Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them**, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:
- End of the sermon on the mount
  - Lots of things we should do
- Just after instituting the sacrament amongst the Nephites which is a renewal of the baptismal covenant
- 3 Nephi 18:12-13  
12) And I give unto you a commandment **that ye shall do these things**. And if ye shall always do these things blessed are ye, for ye are built upon my rock.
  - Elder David A Bednar  
"Ordinances and covenants are the building blocks we use to construct our lives upon the foundation of Christ and His Atonement. We are connected securely to and with the Savior as we worthily receive ordinances and enter into covenants, faithfully remember and honor those sacred commitments, and do our best to live in accordance with the obligations we have accepted. And that bond is the source of spiritual strength and stability in all of the seasons of our lives." ("Therefore They Hushed Their Fears", April 2015 General Conference)
  - Covenants is how the Lord binds us to Him and then blesses us as we keep them
- By doing (acting in faith) we will receive a witness that He indeed is God's son and what he taught is of God
- By doing the things he taught we build upon Christ



## Continuing to build on that foundation

- Lastly
- #3 We must continue to build and maintain what we have built
- Alma 32 - Parable of the seed
  - Experiment on the word - Plant the seed
  - It grows – swells within our breast
  - Grows to a tree that brings forth good fruit
  - You know it is a good seed – you have a testimony
- Alma 32:38-39

38) But if ye neglect the tree, and take no thought for its nourishment, behold it will not get any root; and when the heat of the sun cometh and scorcheth it, because it hath no root it withers away, and ye pluck it up and cast it out.

39) Now, this is not because the seed was not good, neither is it because the fruit thereof would not be desirable; but it is because your ground is barren, and ye will not nourish the tree, therefore ye cannot have the fruit thereof.
- If we act on our faith then we receive a greater witness
- If we do not act then we are as Alma described we "pluck it up and cast it out"
- So what does that mean really?
  - Go back to the wise man/foolish man after the sermon on the mount
  - Perhaps t we a received a witness of Christ
  - But then we don't really strive to follow what the Savior taught
  - Example – we become casual in our observance of the commandments

- Foolish man will look to other sources for answers to life's questions
  - Instead of the scriptures and the words of the Lord's servants the foolish man turns to other sources
    - Internet makes those other sources readily available to us
    - To use the words of Paul as we turn to other sources and become meshed in them
    - WE CAN BECOME
- Ephesians 4:14  
*tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;*
- The rock we must build our testimony and faith on is Jesus Christ
  - That is where we can stand and be safe from the fiery darts of Satan
    - We are able to deal with hard questions
    - These things that would cause us to doubt our testimonies
    - Because we are anchored, centered we are able to put into proper perspective the things that aren't important to our salvation
    - We can apply the atonement for tragedy and sin
- To build on any other foundation is to become vulnerable to the fiery darts of Satan
- We build on that sure foundation by gaining a testimony of Christ by having a soft heart, doing his will and gaining a witness of Book of Mormon
- We continue to build on the foundation by keeping the covenants we have made
- LET US BE WISE not FOOLISH

## **Testimony**