

Laying The Foundation

by

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A lot of talk has surfaced about the condition of our Nation and this concern is certainly not without warrant. Considering the increasing moral decline and the emotional draw to make right things that God said are an abomination one can easily see the dangers possibly on the horizon should we continue this drive into self-pleasure. The prophet Jeremiah said it best, "O Lord the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps" (Jer 10:23). Since the dawn of time man has had the embedded desire to worship something. Over the centuries men have chosen to worship nature (trees, sun, moon, stars, animals), gods of imagination (man carved wooden or metal dolls), fame, fortune, pleasure, etc... The problem is that none of these provide that which is needed to fill this void. Solomon said it best after he attempted to fill this void with everything this world has to offer, "Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Ecc 1:2, 12:8).

This issue has not stopped in the world of the carnal, but, has begun spilling into the dwelling of the sanctified, the church. So much so that many of the "seasoned" and "unseasoned" brethren alike have begun to question the future of the church in this nation. Allowing such talk can easily cause a loss of trust in the Lord and in His Holy Writ.

But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men,
which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing
and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a
fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree,
my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both
yield salt water and fresh. Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge

among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness
of wisdom" (James 3:8-13).

The intent of James' message should be perfectly clear. Show wisdom through what we say in all matters. Concerning the word of God, "Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away" (Matt 24:35, Mark 13:31, Luke 21:33). Bottom line? "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding," (Prov 3:5). While on the Earth Jesus informed His disciples that the future of the church was safe and it still is today (Matt 16:18). As followers of Christ we must increase our faith and trust that the will of God will be done regardless of what we think, feel, or desire. "And the Lord said, If ye had faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye might say unto this sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea; and it should obey you" (Luke 17:6). The point is, trust in the Lord to provide, follow His commands to nth degree, and all will be well.

This past week this author had the privilege of seeing the future generation of the Church and the Nation at work. The Memphis School of Preaching in Memphis, TN conducts a one week camp for the training of Christian young men who will one day be head of the house, elders, deacons, Bible class teachers, song leaders, and preachers. Directed by B.J. Clarke, this camp completed its 5th year of work in 2012. Dear reader, this author had the honor of spending a week with 45 of the best young men this Nation has to offer. Their various backgrounds converged on the MSOP campus with one desire in mind: Learn God's word and how to teach it to others. These young men came with awards and recognition in academics and athletics to the extent that any one of them could have "written their own ticket" of how they chose to spend their Summer. Instead, they "chose" to spend a week in a classroom environment in study of the inspired Word. Consequently, this author has seen the security of future generations who desire to follow the Almighty into eternity. It is with thanksgiving that I address the families of these young men for preparing them from their youngest years for service to God. They did not come to this week unprepared and leave prepared. They came with years of preparation already instilled in them and hopefully left with "tools" that would be useful in teaching God's inspired Word to a world lost in sin. To those families you are to be commended. Much gratitude also goes to the congregations that supported this week, not mentioned individually so as to not miss any. For those who may not know, this camp has "no tuition" to attend. There are two activities of which the campers must provide funding for (\$35) but that is all. Feeding 45 young men and the staff for the

camp is provided by these congregations and those generous brethren. My personal thanks goes to the shepherds of the Marshall Church of Christ for allowing us the time to attend this camp.

At the beginning of the week several of the campers were asked why they came. Many of the answers were in line with what one would expect from teenagers. With eyes cast toward the ground they exclaimed "to learn more," and "to be with friends," etc... Some even added that they had no desire to preach but simply to learn. The question was posed to these same individuals at the end of the week and as one can imagine the answers had changed. The change in heart and conviction was apparent as these same young men would look eye to eye and say, "I want to preach," and "I will attend MSOP." Dear reader this is exciting. We can become complaisant in our day to day life and become troubled as to the future of the Church. This is not new. The disciples that had spent time with the Master became troubled about the future as well. Recognizing the troubled hearts of the 12 the Master exclaimed "Let not your hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in Me, In My Father's house are many mansions. If it were not so I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you and if I go I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also" (John 14:1-3). Comfort can be taken in the knowledge that there will be more in Heaven because of the efforts of these young men.

According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon. For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ (1Cor 3:10-11). And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone (Eph 2:20). Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity (2Tim 2:19).