

OUR SURE FOUNDATION

(by Rev. Ivan Mehosky, EUMC, Sunday, January 20, 2013)

The light of the candles reminds me of the Light of Christ in our hearts, and in the world.

Out of the darkness of December 14th, the slaughter of the innocents, “A voice was heard in Ramah, Lamentation, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, Because they are no more.” (Matthew 2:18).

Yet amidst the evil, the Advent of the Light of Christ came shinning through. His Light overcame the darkness as we celebrated His birth. His star filled our hearts once more.

As we move into the New Year and into the Church season of Epiphany, the revealing of the Christ-Child to the world, let us look forward to His blessings and His mercy and grace and love in our lives. The birth of Christ is one of the sure foundations of our faith.

I want to talk to you today about the other “sure foundations,” that we need to hold to as tightly as we might hold the hand of the Father when we pray.

I want to tell you a story about a man who was striving to find some answers in his life: What was the will of God for his life, what work did God want him to do, and was he doing enough to please God and thus earn his salvation? He just wasn't ready, he thought.

He was unsure and restless, and had a sad look about him. People often saw him sitting alone in the church yard with his Bible.

One day, just before the Sunday morning service, one of the church ministers went over to him.

“What's the matter,” he asked?

“I'm waiting to hear from God,” the man replied. And he told him all the questions he had about God's will, and of works, and forgiveness and salvation, and that he felt he was not good enough to be loved or saved, and he just needed to do more in this life.

The minister took the Bible from the man's hands, and said, “then you shall hear from God today, for God speaks to us through His holy written word.”

Dumbfounded, the man said he never thought of it that way, and asked, “Can you help me?”

“Yes,” he said, and turned to John 6: 28-29, and read:

“Then they said unto Him, ‘What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?’ Jesus answered and said unto them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe on him who He sent.’”

“The first and greatest work God wants you to do is believe on His Son Jesus with all your heart, soul and mind, for this is the will of God for your life,” he said to the man.

And so that you may know God's will for your life, listen, for all your good works shall flow from this, and he turned to verse 40 of the sixth chapter of John:

“And this is the will of Him that sent me, that any one which sees the Son, and believes on Him, may have everlasting life: And I will raise him up at the last day.”

And Jesus also said to His disciples that they see Him and believe; blessed are they who have not seen and believe.

This, my friend, is the foundation you seek. And the man said, “O Lord, I believe, help me with my unbelief!”

But the man still had questions: didn't he need to do more works to be forgiven and saved?

“Tell you what,” he replied to the man, “why don't we take a walk on the old Romans Road? We can do it right here.

Do I need to pack? Nope. Toothbrush? Nope. It is a journey we'll take right from here along the path of salvation in the Book of Romans.

Remember, the Apostle Paul walked these roads in proclaiming the Good News of Jesus Christ. And he knew the sure foundation of these well built roads, for all led to Rome!

A traveler felt safe on these roads with such a firm foundation. And along the way at different intervals were mile markers to tell the traveler how far he had walked and how far it was to his destination.

And thus they began their walk on the Romans Road.

As they started out, they noticed the road being very broad. Soon they came to the first mile marker. Attached was the message from Romans 3:23:

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

“We all have sin in our hearts,” said the minister. “We were born with sin and born under the power of sin's control.”

And the man said, “O Lord, I am a sinner!”

And so they walked on. Up ahead was the second mile marker. Attached to it was a message from Romans 6:23: **“For the wages of sin is death...”**

“Sin has an ending,” said the minister, “We all face physical death, which is the result of sin. But a worse death is spiritual death that separates us from God, and will last for all eternity.”

And the man said, “Surely I, the greatest of sinners deserve death for my sins against the Lord, my God!”

Then the man gazed upon the second part of the message:

“But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

The man was kneeling now and heard, “Salvation is a free gift from God to you! You can’t earn this gift, but you must reach out and receive it by faith.”

And the man said, “O God, forgive me and save me.”

As they walked on, through the book of Romans, the path became very narrow, and before long they reached the third mile marker and there attached was a message from Romans 5:8:

“But God demonstrated His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

And the minister said, “When Jesus died on the cross He paid sin’s penalty, the price for all the sins of the world-this He took upon Himself on the cross!

He bought us out slavery to sin and death! The only condition is that you believe what He has done for us, for upon that moment, you will be joined to Him in new life forever.”

“Today, Lord Jesus, I give my life to you,” said the man.

“Look!” said the minister, “There is another message here, and it’s Romans 8:1:

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus...”

“My Lord and my Savior, thank you,” said the man, his countenance now different than before-his face bright.

On they trod this narrow path, with joy in their hearts, and soon came to the fourth mile marker. The message attached to the marker was Romans 10:13:

“For whoever calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved.”

“Call out to God in the name of Jesus,” said the minister, and the man did so with all his heart and soul and tears.

No more weary travelers on this Romans Road, it wasn’t too long before they approached the fifth mile marker and a message from Romans 10:16:

“So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”

They were nearing the end of their walk on the Romans Road.

Just up ahead was the final message, but this one was different in appearance! It seemed to glow with a brilliant white light that drew them nearer! The message was Romans 10:9 and 10, and the man, holding his hands up to God and cried out with all his heart and strength:

“That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

And the man said, “Lord Jesus, I believe with my whole heart that you died for my sins and were raised from the dead for my salvation.”

And the minister replied, “So you see, my friend, our entire walk on the Romans Road has been surrounded by God’s great, great love for us. For this is the greatest love He has for us echoed in John the 3rd chapter verse 16:

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son so that all that believe in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life.”

“That’s how much God loves you!” But let me better illustrate it with this story,” the minister said.

There was a pastor in England named Harry Morehouse, known as the “Boy Preacher,” because of his youth, who came over to America, to Chicago in the late 1800’s to Dwight Moody’s school to preach. For seven days in a row he preached on John 3:16 as the statement of the greatest love that God has for us. He went all through the Scriptures expounding on God’s love, but always returned to John 3:16!

After preaching his final sermon on John 3:16, he told the people that all week long he had been trying to tell them just how much God loves them. But he felt his stammering tongue could not do it justice.

He said, “If I could take Jacob’s ladder and stretch it all of the way to Heaven, so that I was greeted by the angel Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I asked him how much does God love us, he would say: “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believe in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

This is our sure foundation and His greatest gift. If you have never walked the Romans Road, Jesus is knocking on the door of your heart to join Him. The foundation is still as firm as ever and will always be. May we rest assured in His unending love for us and place our trust in Him. May always be so. Amen.