

—{1}. **1 Timothy 6:19** **'Foundation for the Future'**

A. Our text this New Year's Eve morning is, "storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of that which is life indeed." (1 Timothy 6:19 NAS)

1. our message this morning is taken from these words 'storing ... the treasure of a good foundation for the future'

B. Introduction

1. we could spend our time this morning reminiscing over 2006

- a. getting nostalgic, perhaps even maudlin
- b. dwelling on past successes, maybe too much so
- c. or thinking of past failures, getting depressed over them
- d. but I would like us to take as our example, Paul, as he expressed it in writing to the church at Philippi (3:13-14): "Brethren, I do not regard myself as having laid hold of *it* yet; but one thing *I do*: forgetting what *lies* behind and reaching forward to what *lies* ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus." (NAS)

2. so, let us forget those things that lie behind and reach forward

- a. looking at the year 2007 that lies ahead of us
- b. at its potential, its possibilities, its opportunities
- c. for now, 2007 is a blank sheet of paper, absolutely clean
 - (A) but how will it read a year from now?
 - (B) when with the pen and ink of our actions, our words, and our thoughts, we have written with our lives on it?
- d. that question will be answered very much according to the 'foundation of the future' on which our lives are laid down

3. Foundations are important

a. I am aware of that fact

- (A) because our house is one of those that grew like Topsy, with several additions to the original structure
- (B) it does not have a full basement
- (C) nor does it have one unified foundation
- (D) and with settling over time, there is a crack in the living room wall and ceiling, well-nigh irreparable, at one of the places where an addition was made

b. as another example, if you are driving south on Yonge, Bathurst or Bayview, there are places where if it is clear, you can see the CN Tower high over Toronto

- (A) an average person in looking at that tower could well exclaim, 'What a tremendous Tower!' ^{—{2}}.
- (B) but an architect, someone really understanding towers, would say, 'What a foundation!'
- (C) if you had been downtown when the CN Tower was being built you would have seen that foundation, many stories deep, taking many months to construct
- (D) but now it is hidden, invisible beneath the earth

c. the foundation of our life is just as important

- (A) it lies beneath the surface
- (B) it may not be visible to those around us
- (C) but they will see the fruits of a solid foundation in our attitudes, actions and life

4. What are the steps, then, in making a good foundation?

a. how can we store up a 'foundation for the future'?

b. here are three steps for us to think upon this morning:

- (A) One. Seek the Lord First
- (B) Two. Seek the Lord Only
- (C) Three. Seek the Lord's Will

C. One. Seek the Lord First

1. The idea of seeking the Lord is expressed a number of ways in the Holy Scriptures, other than those exact words

- a. the form of Hebrew poetry which expresses truth in terms of parallel ideas – that is, where the same thing is said using two different phrases – gives us examples such as ...
- (A) ... trusting God, Psalms 9:10: “*And those who know Thy name will put their trust in Thee; For Thou, O LORD, hast not forsaken those who seek Thee.*” (NAS)
 - (B) ... calling upon God, as in prayer, Isaiah 55:6: “*Seek the LORD while He may be found; Call upon Him while He is near.*” (NAS)
 - (C) ... also as ‘waiting on God’ in Psalm 69:6
 - (D) ... and such prayer is also termed seeking God’s face as in Psalm 27:7–8: “*Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice, And be gracious to me and answer me. When Thou didst say, ‘Seek My face,’ my heart said to Thee, ‘Thy face, O LORD, I shall seek.’*” (NAS)
 - (E) ... seeking righteousness, Zephaniah 2:3: “*Seek the LORD, All you humble of the earth Who have carried out His ordinances; Seek righteousness, seek humility. ...*” (NAS)
 - (F) ... which enlightens Jesus’ instructions about seeking the kingdom of God in Matthew 6:33: “*But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.*” (NAS)
- b. all ways of expressing what it means to seek God: trusting in God, coming to God in prayer, coming humbly, coming with a desire to be right with God, coming to be ruled by God as part of His kingdom

2. and this is the first requirement before all others

- a. because the Bible tells of the terrible fate of those who refuse to trust in God, to turn to God, to seek God
- b. hence, Jesus, early in His ministry, said, “*Everyone who comes to Me, and hears My words, and acts upon them, I will show you whom he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation upon the rock; and when a flood rose, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. But the one who has heard, and has not acted *accordingly*, is like a man who built a house upon the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.*” (Luke 6:47-49 NAS)
- c. what are His words that we must hear and act upon? Well, here are a few of them ...
 - (A) Luke 13:3b, 5b: “*... no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish.*” (NAS)
 - (B) John 5:24: “*Truly, truly, I say to you, he who hears My word, and believes Him who sent Me, has eternal life, and does not come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life.*” (NAS)

- (C) John 6:40: "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him, may have eternal life; and I Myself will raise him up on the last day." (NAS)
- (D) John 14:11: "Believe Me that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me; otherwise believe on account of the works themselves." (NAS)

3. now, since seeking the Lord, of finding salvation in Christ, is so important, it is not something that we should put off

- a. David gave this command, "Now set your heart and your soul to seek the LORD your God ..." (1 Chronicles 22:19)
- b. Paul quotes the Scriptures to show its primacy: "for He says, 'at the acceptable time I listened to you, and on the day of salvation I helped you'; behold, now is 'the acceptable time,' behold, now is 'the day of salvation' —" (2 Corinthians 6:2 NAS)

4. So, in storing up a good foundation for the future, 'Seek the Lord first'; and, ...

D. Two. Seek the Lord Only

1. In the day of Isaiah, Egypt was a mighty power

- a. it had held a dominant position in the mid-east for well over a millennium – with their riches and their army
- b. so it was natural for the king of Judah to turn to them for help against the encroaching Assyrian empire
- c. so God spoke through Isaiah these words, "Woe to the rebellious children, ... Who execute a plan, but not Mine, And make an alliance, but not of My Spirit, In order to add sin to sin; Who proceed down to Egypt, Without consulting Me, To take refuge in the safety of Pharaoh, And to seek shelter in the shadow of Egypt! Therefore the safety of Pharaoh will be your shame, And the shelter in the shadow of Egypt, your humiliation." (30: 1-3 NAS) and "Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, And rely on horses, And trust in chariots because they are many, And in horsemen because they are very strong, But they do not look to the Holy One of Israel, nor seek the LORD!" (31:1 NAS)

d. it is so tempting to

- (A) put our plans ahead of God's plans
- (B) to trust our own or other's strength rather than in God

- e. but when push comes to shove, then the enemy will swoop upon us, and see through all our defences much as the Rabshekah did as he taunted King Ahaz and the people in Jerusalem: “Behold, you rely on the staff of this crushed reed, *even* on Egypt; on which if a man leans, it will go into his hand and pierce it. So is Pharaoh king of Egypt to all who rely on him.” (Isaiah 36:6 NAS)
2. But, God would have us trust, not only first and foremost on Him, but only on Him, whether it be the matter of salvation or the matter of our daily life in every aspect: at home, at school, at work, at play ... that we trust in him in all things
- a. In Ephesians 2:8-9 we read, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, *it is* the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.” (2:8-9 NAS)
- b. and the One who saves us by His grace is the One who keeps us by the self-same grace, “Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, *be* glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.” (Jude 1:24-25 NAS)
- c. we have the promise “And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to *His* purpose.” (Romans 8:28 NAS)
- d. as the hymn-writer has so nobly put it
- Trust in Him ye saints forever—
He is faithful, changing never;
Neither force nor guile can sever
Those He loves from Him! —^{3}.
3. And can God meet the challenge of our solely trusting in Him? Listen ... “Do you not know? Have you not heard? The Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth Does not become weary or tired. His understanding is inscrutable. He gives strength to the weary, And to *him who* lacks might He increases power. Though youths grow weary and tired, And vigorous young men stumble badly, Yet those who wait for the LORD Will gain new strength; They will mount up *with* wings like eagles, They will run and not get tired, They will walk and not become weary.” (Isaiah 40:28-31 NAS)
4. So, in storing up a good foundation for the future, ‘Seek the Lord only’; and ...

E. Three. Seek the Lord's Will

1. Paul, in commencing the practical section of the letter to the church in Rome, tells us to offer ourselves to God, to be His
 - a. and ends with the purpose, "... that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:2b NAS)
 - b. this matter of the will of God is an immense subject – one that we can hardly begin to touch upon in any sermon
 - c. but one touching every part of our Christian life

2. the context of our text this morning has to do with the matter of material wealth, of riches, of things
 - a. we live in an affluent town, in the midst of affluent people
 - b. we live with unprecedented wealth
 - c. the poverty line in our society is far higher than the wealth line in most regions of the world
 - d. In Thursday's Era-Banner, there was this headline: 'We Have Too Much Stuff' and an article by David Suzuki in which he says 'Excesses often mark the holidays – too much food, too much drink and too much stuff.'⁽⁴⁾ He goes on to tell us how we should choose our stuff so its ecological impact is minimal rather than Paul's lesson that when we have God we can do without stuff: "But godliness *actually* is a means of great gain, when accompanied by contentment." (1 Timothy 6:6 NAS)
 - e. and here we can have a direct conflict between God's will and our will ... which will be given the rule?

3. or, how will we treat our material wealth in 2007?
 - a. will we seek to amass more, to get more toys?
 - b. or will we consider ourselves as stewards – people into whose hands God has placed many gifts, much riches?
 - c. "Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father..." (James 1:17a NAS)
 - d. it is extremely difficult to seek the Lord first, and to seek the Lord only, if we are busying ourselves in seeking things
 - e. Jesus said, "No slave can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth." (Luke 16:13 NRSV)

- f. Paul wanted Timothy to teach, and you and me to learn, what we read in our Scripture reading ^{—{5}}. this morning; that our material blessing be used to be rich in good works, in generosity sharing with others,
- (A) so that we obey Jesus' words, "But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal" (Matthew 6:20 NAS)
 - (B) so we lay down a 'good foundation for the future'
4. To store up a good foundation for the future, 'Seek the Lord first; seek the Lord only; seek the Lord's will.'

F. Conclusion

1. in our Christian faith there are a number of truths
 - a. that are like a coin
 - (A) having two much different pictures
 - (B) depending upon which side you are looking at
 - b. so these truths have two aspects
 - (A) one when looked at from God's side
 - (B) another when looked at from man's side
 - (C) and yet one truth
 - c. so it is with the matter of 'foundation for the future'
 - (A) as with other aspects of Salvation
 - (1) God has done absolutely everything needed
 - (a) providing a perfect foundation on which we can build our lives
 - (b) "For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."
(1 Corinthians 3:11 NAS)
 - (2) yet on the other hand, God has chosen to leave with each man, each woman, each boy, each girl
 - (a) a responsibility either to receive or to reject
 - (b) the foundation He has provided
 - (c) as we have learned this morning
2. Consider, then, this morning, what foundation for the future, for 2007, you will chose, as we sing in closing, 'How Firm a Foundation'

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

Further sermons and illustrations may be found at the web-site, www.holwick.com. Materials in this sermon from Rev. David Holwick's database are identified by “Kerux” followed by a sermon or illustration number.

2. Altered from ‘What a Foundation!’ by Jack Lannom – Kerux illustration #17161
3. ‘Praise the Saviour’ by Thomas Kelly (1769-1854)
4. David Suzuki, ‘Do you have an SUV in your living room?’, December 28, 2006, The Era-Banner, Newmarket, Ontario,
5. 1 Timothy 6:6-21