

The Foundation Stands

2 Tim. 2:19

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"But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness. And their word will eat as doth a canker: of whom is Hymenaeus and Philetus; Who concerning the truth have erred, saying that the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some. 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. But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and of silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour, and some to dishonour. If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work."

(2 Timothy 2:16-21, KJV).

In verse 19 of this text there is an important lesson for everybody, especially Christians who may be discouraged or disillusioned. In order to bring out this lesson we must become familiar with the context.

The apostle Paul instructed Timothy to "shun profane and vain babblings." Any irreverent talk or conversation that would lead to ungodliness (express irreverence toward Deity), Timothy was to avoid. "But shun profane and vain babblings, for they will increase to more ungodliness," (verse 16).

In verse 17, Paul made Timothy aware of the cancerous influence of such babblings. This time, by naming two men who were guilty of this. "And their message will spread like cancer. Hymenaeus and Philetus are of this sort, who have strayed concerning the truth, saying that the resurrection is already past; and they overthrow the faith of some." So, Timothy was to avoid (shun) the kind of vain babblings that came from these kind of people.

It must have been distressing then (for we know it is today) - when men like Hymenaeus and Philetus do their evil deeds and overthrow the faith of some. It can discourage and dishearten. But, here's where verse 19 comes in: "Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity'."

By giving in to temptation, individual members of the house of God fall into sin; they

dishonor themselves and place their souls in eternal peril. BUT, THE FIRM FOUNDATION OF GOD STANDS! It is neither weakened nor destroyed by the backslidings of men! And, it doesn't matter how many individuals you witness who fall into iniquity. STILL, the firm foundation of God stands. The apparent success of false teachers, wicked men and unbelievers IS NOT EVIDENCE THAT GOD'S PLAN OR GOD'S HOUSE HAS FAILED!

This is the lesson we need to remember. We know (because the New Testament says it, and we see it) - that there will be false teachers to arise from within the church; that there will be men who delight in creating strife; the faith of some will be overthrown, and some will turn away their ears from sound doctrine. We know things like this will happen. But Paul assures Timothy (and us) that THE FIRM FOUNDATION OF GOD STANDETH! If you are a faithful child of God, you belong to a building that has a firm, indestructible foundation! Even if men like Hymenaeus and Philetus arose every hour - STILL, the firm foundation stands. The house of God (the church) has been "built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone," (Eph. 2:20). THIS IS THE BUILDING YOU ARE A PART OF!

So, when we observe apostasy; when we see weakness and sin and hear profane babblings - let us be concerned for the souls in danger...let us do what we can...let us carry out whatever scriptural actions are called for...but LET US NEVER THINK THAT THE FOUNDATION IS CRUMBLING! It stands. "We are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken," (Heb. 13:28).

It was the practice back then, to engrave on the foundation stone of a building, some statement about the origin or purpose of the structure. We see this in Rev. 21:14, where the names of the apostles were written on the twelve foundations of the city of God. This same figure is adapted by Paul in this passage.

First, An Inscription Of Assurance:
"THE LORD KNOWS THOSE
WHO ARE HIS!"

There are so many "bench-warmers" and "time-servers;" so many false teachers and vain babblers - we may have some difficulty separating the good from the bad; hypocrites may deceive us. The Lord has no such problem. He "knows those who are His," (Num. 16:5). God is able to distinguish between His real people, and impostors.

Second, An Inscription Of Duty:
"LET EVERYONE WHO NAMES THE
NAME OF CHRIST DEPART FROM
INIQUITY!"

If we want to be known by the Lord as one of His faithful people, let us shun profane babblings; let us shun those things that further ungodliness...LET US DEPART FROM

INIQUITY. Many others may fall into sin, but if we will continually depart from iniquity - we know we shall be saved, for THE FIRM FOUNDATION OF GOD STANDS.

Daily, let us cleanse ourselves from dishonor, that we might be vessels for honor, "sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work," knowing that we stand upon an indestructible, firm foundation.

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