

I WAITED PATIENTLY FOR THE LORD;
HE TURNED TO ME AND HEARD MY CRY.
HE LIFTED ME OUT OF THE SLIMY PIT,
OUT OF THE MUD AND MIRE;
HE SET MY FEET ON A ROCK
AND GAVE ME A FIRM PLACE
TO STAND.

(PSALM 40:1-2 NIV)

FOUNDATION



On a trip to Egypt, Linda and I marveled at the massive, seemingly eternal, structures left by the ancient Egyptians: the temple complex of Karnak, the foreboding sphinx at Giza, the towering Colossi of Memnon. And, of course, most everyone is familiar with the mighty pyramids of Egypt. There are actually more than seventy pyramids remaining in Egypt, the earliest dating from around 2,700 B.C. That first one—the step pyramid at Saqqara—is still there and, though weathered by time and the callousness of man, is still quite impressive. These structures were built to last and last they certainly have.

In contrast, we were amazed at the shoddy workmanship of the modern Egyptians. Their buildings appear to be thrown together with haphazard abandon. New skyscrapers still under construction have a framework made of cement looking more like Swiss cheese than substantial concrete. And the uneven land upon which these buildings are erected looks to be as unstable as the structures themselves. My wife and I noted in our journal: “Try not to go into new buildings. Walk in the middle of the street.”

I was reminded of that Egyptian craftsmanship while reading the third chapter of First Corinthians:

According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. (1 Corinthians 3:10-11)

Those modern buildings in Cairo will never stand the test of the centuries as have their ancient counterparts. It is clear that they have not been built with the same care, precision, and substantial building materials.

God’s word makes it clear that there is only one foundation upon which we can meaningfully build our lives: Jesus Christ. Our work, our thoughts—even our service

to God—will never stand against the final test of fire if not grounded in Jesus. Even as believers, we will stand before our God and be judged on the basis of what we have accomplished. And none of it will count—unless it has been done in the name of Jesus.

Bedrock

Archaeologists have determined that before the first stone of the Great Pyramid of Khufu was ever set into place, the workers dug down to solid bedrock, which they leveled perfectly, giving the man-made mountain a perfectly flat, solid, and dependable foundation. Upon this solid foundation the world's largest stone pyramid has stood for more than 4,600 years.

The believer's bedrock is the perfectly level, dependable Son of God: Jesus Christ.

Some people have vast monetary wealth; some people live in palaces; some people are in possession of great intellect, technical knowledge, or wisdom; others have superbly fit bodies, or breathtaking beauty. But the Christian has one thing no one else has: a foundation. Everything or everyone else on which we depend can degenerate over time, or be lost all together. But the believer's foundation of Christ is more substantial, more long-lasting (indeed, eternal) than even that perfectly established bedrock beneath Khufu's pyramid.

The Hebrew word *yasad* means an immovable base on which a solid structure can be erected. The parallel to the aforementioned pyramids is obvious, but now put it in more personal terms: the believer has a *yasad*—an immovable base—(Jesus Christ) on which to build a solid structure (his life). No matter what happens, we have this solid, dependable foundation upon which we can stand. No tragedy, no disappointment, no frustration can overwhelm us because we stand on a rock.

*How Firm a Foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?
To you who for refuge to Jesus have fled?*

*"Fear not, I am with thee; O be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.*

*"When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow,
For I will be with thee, thy trials to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.*

*"When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.
Thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine.*

*"The soul that on Jesus hath learned to repose
I will not, I will not desert to its foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake!
I'll never, no, never, no, never forsake!"*

(Rippon's Selection of Hymns, 1787)

Edom's princes saw the whole country left desolate, and counted upon its easy conquest; but there was one great difficulty in their way—quite unknown to them—"The Lord was there"; and in His presence lay the special security of the chosen land. Whatever may be the machinations and devices of the enemies of God's people, there is still the same effectual barrier to thwart their design. The saints are God's heritage, and He is in the midst of them, and will protect His own. What comfort this assurance yields us in our troubles and spiritual conflicts! We are constantly opposed, and yet perpetually preserved! How often Satan shoots his arrows against our faith, but our faith defies the power of hell's fiery darts; they are not only turned aside, but they are quenched upon its shield, for "the Lord is there." Our good works are the subjects of Satan's attacks. A saint never yet had a virtue or a grace which was not the target for hellish bullets: whether it was hope bright and sparkling, or love warm and fervent, or patience all-enduring, or zeal flaming like coals of fire, the old enemy of everything that is good has tried to destroy it. The only reason why anything virtuous or lovely survives in us is this, "the Lord is there."

If the Lord be with us through life, we need not fear for our dying confidence; for when we come to die, we shall find that "the Lord is there"; where the billows are most tempestuous, and the water is most chill, we shall feel the bottom, and know that it is good: our feet shall stand upon the Rock of Ages when time is passing away. Beloved, from the first of a Christian's life to the last, the only reason why he does not perish is because "the Lord is there." When the God of everlasting love shall change and leave His elect to perish, then may the Church of God be destroyed; but not till then, because it is written, JEHOVAH SHAMMAH, "The Lord is there." (Charles Haddon Spurgeon)