

6th September 2020 6 pm Healing and Refreshing: On Firm Foundations

Led by Ann Gibbons. Meditation and prayers by Lynda Howells

Introduction.....	1
Hymn: The Church's One Foundation.....	1
Reading: Luke 6:46-49 [NLT].....	2
Song: In Christ Alone.....	2
Meditation: Building on Firm Foundations.....	3
Prayer Activity.....	5
Intercessions.....	6
Blessing to you all.....	7
Song: Cornerstone (<i>My Hope is Built on Nothing Less</i>).....	8

Introduction

[Ann Gibbons:]

Welcome to this Healing and Refreshing service, part of Sundays at 6pm at St. John's Church, Kenilworth. Good to have you with us again. Lynda and I will be leading the service through this time together. Our theme tonight is 'Building on a Firm Foundation'. Lynda has one of her amazing meditations to read to us.

There will be times of quiet for reflection, a prayer activity, which you can take part in if you wish, and a prayer time. We also have some songs for you too.

Shall we begin with a prayer.

Father, we have come to this time together tonight in the sure promise that Your Spirit is with us. We are thankful that we feel safe and comfortable in Your presence. But we are aware that being a Christian in other countries is becoming increasingly difficult. We pray that You will strengthen, comfort and heal those who live in countries where Christians are persecuted for their faith. Give them courage and a great awareness that You are with them. Grant that we will be safe at this service tonight, Lord, and are able to reflect on Your love for us in comfort and stillness. Touch the hearts of those who seek to destroy the foundations of our faith. We ask this in Your Name, Lord.
Amen.

Hymn: The Church's One Foundation

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. The church's one foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is His new creation
By water and the Word:
From heaven He came and sought her
To be his holy Bride;
With his own blood He bought her,
And for her life He died. | 2. Elect from every nation,
Yet one o'er all the earth,
Her charter of salvation
One Lord, one faith, one birth;
One holy Name she blesses,
Partakes one holy food.
And to one hope she presses,
With every grace endued. |
|---|--|

3. Though with a scornful wonder
Men see her sore oppressed,
By schisms rent asunder,
By heresies distressed,
Yet saints their watch are keeping,
Their cry goes up, "How long?"
And soon the night of weeping
Shall be the morn of song.

4. 'Mid toil and tribulation,
And tumult of her war,
She waits the consummation
Of peace for evermore;
Till, with the vision glorious,
Her longing eyes are blest,
And the great church victorious
Shall be the church at rest.

5. Yet she on earth hath union
With those whose rest is won,
And mystic sweet communion
With God the Three in One.
O happy ones and holy!
Lord, give us grace that we,
Like them, the meek and lowly,
On high may dwell with thee!

Reading: Luke 6:46-49 [NLT]

Jesus told a short and important parable, in which the characters are two builders who constructed similar buildings with different results. Jesus, a carpenter by trade, would have known a thing or two about building a house, and is quite clear about the foundations of each house. I'm going to read a reading from Luke chapter 6, verses 46 to 49.

Building on a solid foundation.

⁴⁶ "So why do you keep calling me 'Lord, Lord!' when you don't do what I say? ⁴⁷ I will show you what it's like when someone comes to me, listens to my teaching, and then follows it. ⁴⁸ It is like a person building a house who digs deep and lays the foundation on solid rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against that house, it stands firm because it is well built. ⁴⁹ But anyone who hears and doesn't obey is like a person who builds a house right on the ground, without a foundation. When the floods sweep down against that house, it will collapse into a heap of ruins."

Jesus says it's clear that the foundation matters in our lives. And the foundation needs to be Him, Jesus Christ. Faith in His words, and practising His words, is the foundation that matters in our lives. And that foundation gives the cornerstone, which brings us to God, as in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the Trinity, the three in one.

Song: In Christ Alone

Shortly, Lynda will bring her meditation to us. And this will be followed by a time of quiet reflection. But before this meditation we have another song, which is *In Christ Alone*.

1. In Christ alone my hope is found,
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This Cornerstone, this solid Ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My Comforter, my All in All,
Here in the love of Christ I stand.
2. In Christ alone! – who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe.
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save:
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied –
For every sin on Him was laid;
Here in the death of Christ I live.
3. There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain:
Then bursting forth in glorious day
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me,
For I am His and He is mine –
Bought with the precious blood of
Christ.
4. No guilt in life, no fear in death,
This is the power of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No power of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand:
Till He returns or calls me home,
Here in the power of Christ I'll stand.

Meditation: Building on Firm Foundations

[Lynda Howells:]

I sit amongst the ruins of a broken world. Where are You, Lord, where are You?
You tell us You are our Father, our Father in Heaven.

I don't know at times, I wonder, lost, bewildered, frightened, confused.
At times, all I thought I believed, I was sure of, is falling, crashing down
like an avalanche, roaring, speeding down the mountain, destroying everything in
its path. I have no control, just like a bit of rock being thrown down,
buried in the snow, buried in the turmoil of uncertainty, blinded, battered,
not knowing the end.

What am I doing? Why am I thinking like this? Have I learned nothing?

Who am I putting my trust in? Who do I want to build my house, my future?

Then I look up: the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars: always there.
They move, they change, but they're always there.

You tell us¹, "Unless the Lord builds the house, its builders labour in vain."
What are my foundations? What or who do I put my trust in?

When my world has crashed, I have no control: my mind in turmoil.

But Jesus calls me. He speaks to me in His holy Word.

Rest. Trust.

Take the yoke that Jesus is offering you. He will lead you through the darkness,
the turmoil. His Word the foundation of everything we build our lives on.

How much do we trust our foundations? What are they? Why do we need them?

What do we want to build? What do we want to use for our foundations?

Do we really need foundations? What's the point? Is there really a purpose?

1 Psalm 127

Who is the builder? Is he reliable? How much input should the builder have in our lives - hourly, daily, weekly, sometimes rarely? Times of emergency, just like ringing 999.

What do we want to build? Homes of peace and hope.

As I'm writing this I'm listening to a hymn of hope being sung in the service of a school, a hymn of joy, hope and faith.

But I'm crying, crying for the sadness, the grief, the feelings of helplessness, which I know many are going through at this moment. Many who know and love You, Lord, whose worlds have come crashing down. To what purpose?

We don't know. We don't understand. And it's hard to trust.

But You are our rock, our firm foundation. And through the mess and the grief, You stand firm. Your Word never changes, Your promises are the foundations for our lives. They are our bedrock. You speak to us through them. They are Your truth, Your promises to us.

Lord, we need You.

You have to be our foundation, the cornerstones on which we build our lives. We will wobble. Sometimes cracks will appear in the shell of our belief. We will falter and fall over. But Your foundations are strong, will never crack or crumble. You will always be there to hold us, to take the strain, the pain, the hurts, to put us back together when we fall apart.

When we try and build on our own foundations of trusting ourselves, what happens when we collapse in a heap of self-doubt, denial, feeling of failure?

You call to us: "My child, you didn't ask. I am always here with my arms open to receive you, to care for you, to be your loving Father. Come, my child. Come."

Yet, what's the point, Lord? What's the purpose?

You have given us the gift of life. Freedom through knowing Jesus, blessings through Your creation, through each other.

But we look around and see, see that people have ignored You, ignored Your blessings and chosen to build on rocky and unsafe ground, destined to collapse at some point, through the sinfulness of man, greed, jealousy, envy, selfishness. Trusting themselves rather than trusting You.

O Lord, when we trust You, we may not understand, not know the exact design of the building of our lives, but we know for certainty, that foundations will never crumble or fall.

What do we want to build and who do we want to build for?

Will You help us, Father? Help us to build a church fit for purpose, through being open to You, being obedient to Your calling, to build stone by stone, block by block, to be Your church in our communities wherever we live, in our families, wherever You call us to go, to be living stones amongst our friends, and with a stranger we pass in the street. Our building should carry on through our lives, day by day, hour by hour, not just at certain times, weekly, special days, Sundays, times of emergency. We should always be open to God's Holy Spirit, building a foundation of God's love for each one of us.

So when we are caught up in sadness, fear, uncertainty, being tossed around like the leaves and the wind, may we always remember the cornerstone, the Lord Jesus Christ, safe, because we are joined with Him, becoming a holy temple², Knowing that one day, the brokenness will be mended because our Father God will have the final say.

We come to You now, just as we are. We come to receive Your love afresh, Your Holy Spirit to breathe new life into each one of us, bringing us healing and hope in our beloved Jesus Christ.
Amen.

[music]

Prayer Activity

[Ann:]

For our prayer activity we're going to look at some more pictures. These will be of walls and stones. There will be Bible verses to look at, and maybe write these down if you would like to, for further meditation and prayer later. Also you might like to begin drawing a foundation, the foundation stone, and carry on drawing the wall of bricks and maybe different shapes and sizes, a bit like a dry stone wall.

And in the blocks write the names of God, such as 'King', 'Majesty' or 'Holy One'. Or write the names that are special to you, so that you use it as your personal foundation of your faith.

[Music - Verses on the screen:]

Isaiah 28:16 [NLT]

Therefore, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: "Look! I am placing a foundation stone in Jerusalem, a firm and tested stone. It is a precious cornerstone that is safe to build on. Whoever believes need never be shaken.

1 Corinthians 3:11 [NIVUK]

For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.

2 Timothy 2:19 [NLT]

But God's truth stands firm like a foundation stone with this inscription: "The LORD knows those who are his," and "All who belong to the LORD must turn away from evil."

Ephesians 2:20 [NLT]

Together, we are his house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus himself.

[End of music]

We hope you found that a peaceful time.

We get so stressed out with the trivia of everyday life. We seem to be constantly bombarded with information on what we should buy, where we should holiday, and how we can keep up with the Joneses, otherwise we can't possibly be happy. And then recently we have had the COVID pandemic, bringing further stress and fear.

But as Christians, we can rejoice in being bombarded with the love of Christ, our sure foundation.

Intercessions

Lynda will now lead us in a time of prayer, and a blessing.
There will then be a song to end our service, our time together.

Thank you for being with us.

[Lynda:]

Many years ago when he was our vicar at St John's, I remember Roger Turner. He told us to pray big prayers and not confine them to *our* vision of what God can do. So I invite you now to pray big prayers.

As we come to spend some time in prayer, please use this time for your own prayers and concerns as you feel guided. Just imagine and picture that your heavenly Father is with you wherever you are.

You have His whole attention. He's listening to your prayers now

Father God, first we say thank You.

Thank You, that You are the constant light shining in the darkness.

You are our hope, especially in these days, when we are really unsure of what the future holds for each one of us, and for those whom we love and care for. We bring our prayers to You, knowing You will listen, and we can trust You with them.

We pray for all our young people, that whatever they may be struggling with, or worried about, through Your Holy Spirit blessing them, they will have peace and reassurance that each one of them is special to You.

We pray for their teachers, and all who have an influence in their lives, that they would be guided to help them to reach out to their own individual places in life, not having to compare to anyone else or anything.

We pray for children, teachers and everyone involved with our children going back to school, that they will be safe as a return to schools with a very different format. We just thank You Lord, thank You for the teachers, for all those in authority who have had to work so hard and there's so much responsibility on them. Thank You.

Lord, in Your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for governments around the world, that they would be led by You in all the decisions they make, for the good of all Your people.

Lord, in Your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray that a vaccine will be found to free us from this terrible virus, to bring healing and restoration to Your world.

We pray for all who are suffering from racism.

In Your eyes, Lord, we are all equal.

May all who profess to love You lead by example.

We pray that any issues which take the police force throughout the world, which has been so much in the news at the moment, Lord, that these issues would be dealt with, and Your will be done.

Lord, in Your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for everyone who is suffering through the greed of others, for the poverty in our world, that we would listen to You and all do our bit to eradicate poverty and suffering, whether this is through our prayers, financial, or practical ways.

Lord, in Your mercy,

Hear our prayer.

We pray for all known to us who are ill or struggling in any way.

And we name them before You now.

[pause]

May they know the comfort and reassurance of Your love for them. And we also pray for all who have been bereaved, for their families, and all who love and care and are grieving.

Please comfort them, Father,
especially in these very difficult times.

We pray for all those families who will be attending funerals this week, Lord, that your Holy Spirit will be close to them and comfort them, in these very different times.

We thank You for our family and our friends, all who we know and care about. And, Lord, we pray for a blessing on those known only to You.

Lord, in Your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

We thank You for the dedication of so many, Lord, doctors, nurses, carers, the emergency services, the military, the fire service, the police, and all who are helping in our communities.

We ask that You protect them from the virus and keep them well.

Lord, in Your mercy,
Hear our prayer.

And finally, Lord, we pray that when this virus has been conquered, the whole of the world will be united and live in peace, according to Your holy Word.

Merciful Father,
**Accept these prayers for the sake of Thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour.
Amen.**

Blessing to you all

Your Father God wants you to know how much you are loved by Him.

You are His precious child - loved so much. He gave Himself to bring you eternal happiness and life through His beloved Son Jesus who died for you, taking your sin upon Himself to enable you to live forgiven and free. Be filled fresh with His peace, hope and joy on your life's journey through good times and bad, knowing that your Father God is by your side.
Amen.

Song: Cornerstone (My Hope is Built on Nothing Less)

Verse 1:

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness
I dare not trust the sweetest frame
But wholly trust in Jesus' name.

Repeat Verse 1

Chorus:

Christ alone, Cornerstone
Weak made strong, in the Saviour's love
Through the storm
He is Lord, Lord of all

Verse 2:

When darkness seems to hide His face
I rest on His unchanging grace.
In every high and stormy gale
My anchor holds within the veil.
My anchor holds within the veil.

Chorus

Verse 3:

When He shall come with trumpet sound
Oh may I then in Him be found
Dressed in His righteousness alone
Faultless, stand before the throne

Chorus

[Transcribed by Hamish Blair with help from <https://otter.ai>]

[NLT] Extract from Holy Bible, New Living Translation copyright 1996, 2004, 2007, 2015 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used under [by permission](#) of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois, 60188. All rights reserved.

The Church's One Foundation – lyrics by Samuel John Stone (1839-1900) written in 1866; usual tune Aurelia by Samuel Sebastian Wesley (1810-1876), written in 1864. Public Domain.

Free to download and use within church online services (provided correct licenses are in place) – please visit www.emw.org.uk/onlinesongs for more information.

<https://www.emw.org.uk/2020/06/the-churchs-one-foundation/>

In Christ Alone – by Stuart Townend (1963-) copyright © 2001 Thankyou Music.

Free to download – as above

<https://www.emw.org.uk/2020/05/in-christ-alone/>

Cornerstone (My Hope is Built on Nothing Less) – by Edward Mote, Eric Liljero, Jonas Myrin and Reuben Morgan. Copyright © 2012 Hillsong Worship. Used by permission.

Free to download – as above

<https://www.emw.org.uk/2020/06/my-hope-is-built-on-nothing-less-cornerstone/>