

THE UNDESERVING, part 3 of Foundations to Build Your Life On
Nov. 29, 2015

This series of sermons is titled Foundations to Build Your Life On. There are foundational truths about life that you need to understand in order to build a successful life. We all, I believe, want to grow up and build a successful life. Ask children what they want to be when they grow up and none of them will say, "I want to grow up to be a failure in life." No, we all want to succeed in life. We may define success differently, but we all want to succeed. None of us wants to fail at life.

Yet, to succeed at life requires the right foundation of beliefs. The right beliefs will not let you down. The right foundation is dependable. Not everything in life is dependable. People are not always dependable. Possessions are not always dependable. Your body is not always dependable.

People can let you down, and many will. People make promises they can't keep. When you make a promise, you intend to keep it. But things often happen that prevent you from keeping your promises. And some people lie and make false promises to us. So people can let you down. You can't always depend on them.

Your possessions can let you down too. Someday your car will let you down. One of my cars died on me outside of Annapolis about ten years ago. I was getting off of Rt. 50 onto the ramp for Rt. 2 north, and the motor just quit running. I coasted off to the left of the ramp. With cars whizzing by at 60 miles an hour on both sides of me, it was a scary place to be. Your possessions will let you down.

As all of us adults who are creeping past middle age know, your body will let you down. Things I used to be able to do, like beat all the children in a race, I can't do anymore. I used to beat most of the teens too. But now I have arthritis problems that prevent me from doing what I used to be able to do. So every day my body lets me down. I can't count on it like I used to be able to.

So what can you depend on in life? That is what this series of sermons is about. I am presenting to you foundational truths that you can count on, truths that will never let you down. These are truths to build a successful life on. We have looked at two of those foundations already.

The existence of God is the first foundation. We respond to God as God by paying attention to Him. We give God the attention He deserves as God. We do this with praise and honor and respect.

The second foundation is that God is the creator of all life. As our creator God deserves our thanks. We owe Him thanks for our lives and all the good in our lives.

These first two foundational truths are about God. The foundational truth we're going to examine today is a truth about us. It is another fact that we must get right or we will fail to build a successful life.

To demonstrate the need to believe these foundational truths, I'm going to do a demonstration this morning. I am going to run from that wall door on one side of this

room, to this doorway on the other side of the room. And I'm going to stop right here (at the doorway). My plan is to run full speed all the way and stop instantly when my foot lands next to the doorway. Do you think that will work? (no) Why won't that work?

There is something the scientists call the law of inertia. The law of inertia means that things moving want to keep moving unless stopped by something. Since there is nothing here, at the doorway, to stop me, my body will continue to move very fast past the doorway and into that wall. And that will probably hurt. If I get the law of inertia wrong, or choose not to believe in it, or choose to ignore it, I'll probably get hurt.

People do get hurt every day because of the truth of the law of inertia. This truth is a part of traffic accidents, where one car doesn't slow down soon enough to keep from crashing into another car.

It is dangerous to ignore the truth of the law of inertia. It is dangerous to take it lightly or not believe in it. If I choose not to believe in the law of inertia and carry out my running plan, I'm going to get hurt. Choosing to ignore the law of inertia doesn't make it go away. If I choose to believe that it only works some of the time or only works for other people, I'm going to get hurt. The only way to protect myself from injury is to believe in the law of inertia and allow enough time to slow myself down so I do not hit the wall that lies just past the doorway.

Another truth of the universe is the law of gravity. Gravity is a force that pulls everything down to the earth. That means that whatever we throw up into the sky is going to come back down. A baseball, a stick, or even an airplane that we get up into the sky is going to come back down. We use gasoline to make the propeller on the airplane go around and the propeller and the wings keep the airplane up in the sky. But when we run out of gasoline, the plane is going to come back down. Gravity pulls it down.

So if you jump off of something, you will fall to the ground. If you jump off of something that is too high, you are going to get hurt. For some of us that is four feet, for others it is six feet, for others maybe eight feet. Anything over ten feet and we will all get hurt, from a sprain to a broken leg or hip. Our bodies are not strong enough to withstand falling jumping from more than ten feet. If you ignore that truth, and try jumping off the roof, you will hurt yourself.

It is dangerous to get the law of inertia wrong. It is dangerous to get the law of gravity wrong. Both the law of inertia and the law of gravity have to do with the planet we live on and how things work on this planet.

Let me give you another example. Your skin protects your body. It holds your blood and stomach and things like that in, and keeps germs out. But your skin can be hurt. You can scrape it off. It can be cut. It can also be burned. There are different levels of burn. If you get a first degree burn, like a sunburn, your skin can heal in 3-5 days. If you get a second degree burn, one that raises a blister under the skin, your body can heal in about a week. But if you get a third degree burn, the most serious, the skin is damaged so badly that it cannot heal itself. That is why we have to be so careful around hot things. Ninety percent of burns happen to people in the kitchen, where hot things are.

Water can cause third degree burns...

...in 5 minutes at 120°
...in 25 seconds at 130°
...in 5 seconds at 140°

The higher the water temperature, the higher the risk of getting burned, and the less time it takes for a third degree burn to occur. Even at 120 degrees, which many people set their hot water heaters on, you can get a third degree burn if you stay in it long enough.

Your skin is sensitive to being burned. You must protect it at all times. Get this truth wrong and you may very well end up getting hurt. Ignoring the truth about your skin can lead to injuries.

Another truth about us is our foundational truth today. For today's foundational truth we are going to look at Paul's letter to the church in Rome. In it he writes...

Romans 3:23 (NIV) ... for all (people) have sinned...

Every person on earth has sinned and will sin. And because we sin, we are each a sinner. We sin against each other, but mostly we sin against God. This is the rest of Romans 3:23.

Romans 3:23 (NIV) ... for all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

The word glory here refers to the importance of God. Remember our first two foundations:

The existence of God is the first foundation. This calls for a response to God of attention, marked by praise, honor, and respect.

The second foundation is that God is the creator of all life. This calls for a response to God of thanks for all of our blessings. These were the correct responses to make to foundation truths number 1 & 2.

So our failure to respond correctly to God is sin. **We have failed to give God the praise and thanks He deserves as God.**

Every person on earth has sinned against God. Every person on earth has failed to give God the attention He deserves as God. Every person has failed to give God thanks for all life and all the good in our lives. We have all failed to give God what is due Him as God. We have all failed to give God what we owe Him as our creator.

Yes, we have given Him some praise and thanks. But we have not given God the total attention He deserves from us.

Our failure is sin. And these are just two of our major sins. The truth is we sin a lot, ... every day. This is the third foundational truth. **(Foundational truth #3: We are all sinner.)** We are all sinners.

As we saw a few moments ago, there is a response to be made to each truth. These truths are not unimportant bits of information to stick in your brain for a quiz someday. No, these are very important pieces of truth that we must respond to every day. We must respond to God as God. We must respond to God as Creator. And we must respond to the fact that we are sinners. **We must respond to this fact because there is a punishment for sin.**

If you think of sin as a crime against God, it may help you understand that sin must be punished. If you steal something from a store, you will get arrested, and then the judge will sentence you to a punishment.

The same is true for sin. There is a punishment for sin. God explains some of that punishment a bit further in the book of Romans.

Romans 6:23 (NIV) For the wages of sin is death...

Wages are something you get for something you do. In the case of sin, we get death. Death is the punishment for sin. We will all stand before God one day and God will list all our sins. Then God, as the perfect judge of the universe, will give us the punishment we deserve for our sin. That punishment is called the second death, the lake of fire, or hell.

But this sermon series is about life, not death. Remember the title of this series is Foundations to Build Your LIFE On. How can we build our life on the truth of our sinfulness? We do so by responding correctly to our sin.

So how do we do that? How do we respond to this truth and build our life on this truth?

1. Confess your sins to God. Confess your sins to God means to go to God in prayer and admit to Him that you are a sinner. List the sins you have committed against God or others. Admit to God that you deserve death for your sins.

2. Repent of your sins. The word repent means to turn. (**repent = "to turn"**) When you repent of your sins, you turn away from them. You turn away from sin and to turn living in obedience to God.

3. Receive Jesus as your Savior and Lord. Believe that Jesus is the savior you need, the only one who can rescue from death. Receive Jesus too as your Lord. Turn your life over to Him and live for Him.

Only through Jesus can you be saved from the punishment of your sin. This is a great promise from God. Look back at that last verse, the whole thing this time.

Romans 6:23 (NIV) For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Today, admit your sin, repent of your sin, and receive Jesus as your Savior and Lord.