

Sure Foundation for Your Times

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[0 : 00] The Lord is exalted, for he dwells on high. He will fill Zion with justice and righteousness. He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge.

The fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure, a sure foundation for your times. I want to give you some encouragement for the new year in light of the troubling times that we are in.

Of course, ever since the fall, we've been in troubling times, haven't we? Sin brings trouble. But there has especially been troubling times down through history, and no doubt we're living in such times.

We witness the undoing of much of the moral and social fabric of our nation, indeed of the world, an apparent withdrawal of God's common graces and common sense.

But here's the good news for God's people in the midst of troubling times, that he, that is the Lord, will be the sure foundation for your times.

[1 : 11] Your times. Now, of course, that was originally spoken of the nation of Judah, to whom Isaiah was prophesying.

But Judah was in deep trouble and was heading for even more troubling times. The mighty Assyrian army was on a roll with victory after victory over many nations, and no one could stand up against Sennacherib's army.

He had totally destroyed the northern kingdom of Israel, the ten tribes, and now he was sweeping down into the southern kingdom, the two tribes. And he had already conquered the fortified cities in Judah and was threatening now to take Jerusalem.

Now, sadly, when in trouble, Judah had leaned on everyone and everything but the Lord up to this point. They sent to Egypt for help, to get horses and chariots, thinking, that's how we'll survive this onslaught of the Assyrians.

But that did not prove helpful, as chapter 30 through 33 showed, that if you're piggybacked on top of Egypt, when Egypt falls, you fall too.

[2 : 25] And that's what exactly happened. So Egypt was no help to them. Then they leaned on their money and tried to pay off the Assyrians. Let's make a treaty with the Assyrians and we'll give you so much gold and silver.

And they stripped it off of the temple, made God pay for it. And they thought in that way, the Assyrians would just go away. But that too backfired and they broke their treaty.

They kept the money and still continued their onslaught. And with all these failed attempts of leaning on their own understanding and resources, now as we dip into chapter 33, they're finally leaning on and looking to the Lord for help.

And the astounding thing is that he assures them of help, even though he was something of a last resort to them. Doesn't that speak of grace?

That even though you ran everywhere else but to me, if you're still coming to me now, sincerely crying out to me, I will be your help.

[3 : 39] Undeserved favor. That's grace. And that's our God. Here's the sweet word of promise. Verse 6 again. He will be the sure foundation for your time, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge.

The fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure. There are three lines and there's three points. A sure foundation, a rich storehouse, and a key to this treasure.

So, number one, he, the Lord, will be the sure foundation for your times. Foundations are extremely important.

The structural security of the entire building depends upon a solid foundation. You remember Jesus finishing his sermon on the mount, talking about a man who built his house on the sand and another who built his house upon the rock and how it went for both of them.

Well, to start with, it looked rosy for both. As long as the weather was fine. But when the rainstorm hit and the flooded rivers and stormy winds beat upon the house, only the house built on the foundation of rock stood firm and the other fell with a great crash.

[4 : 55] And what Jesus is saying there is that that scenario is just as true of your life as it is of houses. It's the troubling times, the storms of life that reveal our need for a sure foundation.

And so here's the good news for us embarking on a new year in times of trouble. He will be the sure foundation for your times. Now, there's only one sure foundation.

In chapter 28, verse 16, Isaiah says, So this is what the Sovereign Lord says. See, I lay in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation.

And the one who trusts in him will never be dismayed, never be panicked. He lays that foundation stone. And of course, Peter in the New Testament tells us that that cornerstone, that precious cornerstone and sure foundation is none other than our Lord Jesus Christ.

So let us then, in every trouble, large or small, trust in him as a sure foundation and know the blessed peace and security of not being moved, not being shaken, as David could say in Psalm 16, 8, I have set the Lord always before me.

[6 : 20] Because he's at my right hand, I will not be moved. He found him to be the sure foundation for his times. But there's more.

Secondly, a rich storehouse, not only a sure foundation in Christ, but a rich storehouse in Christ. He will be a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge.

Have you seen how many are building bomb shelters with storehouses of food and water and medicine and things, first aid kits, things that might be needed if a day of disaster comes?

Well, whatever you think of that, that's the picture here. Here's a rich storehouse for our times, for troubling times, and it's the Lord himself.

And there's everything you will need in troubling times in him. If you have nothing else, you will find he's enough. Indeed, it's really only when we have nothing else that we actually come to know in truth that he is enough.

[7 : 30] We think we need more. We feel like we need more. But we find all that we need is in Jesus. He's all I need. He's all I need. Jesus is all I need.

So, what do you need in troubling times? Well, first of all, you need salvation. And I think too often when we read that word, we think of our conversion and of salvation through faith in Jesus from eternal damnation.

And it obviously sometimes refers to that salvation. But more often than not, in the Psalms and Isaiah, it speaks about deliverance.

A better word, perhaps, to make us see that this concept of salvation is more than just our salvation from sin, but has to do with our deliverance from daily troubles and daily problems where we are in need of rescue.

That's the idea of this word. The word salvation means deliverance, rescue. And so it's that broader sense that we need to think of here to be delivered.

[8 : 46] And when deliverance is your need, he's got you covered. He will be a rich store of salvation, of deliverance. We're constantly in need of being delivered. Delivered from ourselves.

That's my greatest need. Delivered from my flesh, from the world, from the devil. Delivered from temptation. Delivered from wrong responses to trying times.

Delivered from leaning on other saviors like Israel was doing. Leaning on ourselves, what we have, and all these things that fail us.

And when they do fail, we have the Lord as our deliverer, our salvation. So we're delivered from this troubling world, both its threats and its allurements.

There is in Jesus, then, all the salvation, deliverance, that we need. But there's even more valuable resources in this rich storehouse of Christ.

[9 : 47] He's a rich store of salvation, but also a rich store of wisdom and knowledge. And this comes as good news to us. Haven't you found that troubling times reveal our need for wisdom and knowledge beyond our own?

They put us into situations where we don't know what to do, where we're perplexed, and we feel our ignorance. We may have tried all that our wisdom and knowledge would suggest, but it is not enough.

What are we to do in such times? Well, we go down into our rich store of Jesus Christ, and we find the shelves just full of all we need, as in him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

Colossians 2, 3, we had that this morning, didn't we? Well, that's what he's talking about. There's this wisdom, all the riches of wisdom and knowledge in our storehouse for our times, our trying times.

And he not only has it, he's more than willing to share it. And so we go to him and we ask. You remember how James starts out his letter, consider it pure joy, my brothers, when you fall into various kinds of troubles.

[11 : 13] And then he gets to verse 5 and says, if any of you lacks wisdom, well, he should ask God who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given him. So James is telling us trials of many kinds will leave us needing and lacking wisdom to know what to do.

And here's the rich storehouse. It's found in Christ. And he welcomes us to come and ask him for it. And there's no reluctance in him. There's no skimping measure.

He gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. Solomon came to the throne of Israel, and he needed something for his times.

And God appeared to him and said, you can ask me for anything you want. And he asked for wisdom to rule the nation, discernment to administer justice.

That was what he asked of the Lord. Wisdom. And God was so pleased with his request that he made him wiser than any man before him or after him. And he threw in riches and honor and long life as evidence of his delight that he came in his time of need and asked for wisdom.

[12 : 32] This wisdom from heaven is a wisdom that's first pure, then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.

James 3, 17. And Solomon was given a large dose of it. So the Lord is a sure foundation for our times.

He's a rich storehouse in which we find deliverance, wisdom, and knowledge. And lastly, we're told of the key to this treasure. Just like a key unlocks a treasure box and brings us into the possession of it.

So, there's this key that opens the treasure that is found in Christ. We're told in Proverbs 9, 10 that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.

It's the key to wisdom that unlocks these treasures of wisdom and knowledge. So we heard this morning about the wisdom of God.

[13 : 38] And the more we admire it, the more we are to want it. And so we come to him and we seek it, asking him to teach us.

Calvin says, after we have been instructed to realize that whatever we need and whatever we lack is in God and in our Lord Jesus Christ, it remains for us to seek in him and in prayers to ask of him what we have learned to be in him.

So we've learned there's wisdom in our God and Christ. And now, it remains for us to go and to ask. And the fear of the Lord is the key that unlocks this treasure that stands in awe of this God of such wisdom and comes and asks it of him.

There's a treasure trove not only of wisdom and knowledge that the fear of the Lord brings but a treasure trove of salvation and deliverance. That too is part of the treasure that the fear of God unlocks.

Listen to how David puts it in Psalm 33, 16 to 18. No king is saved by the size of his army. That's not the place to go for deliverance. No warrior escapes by his own strength.

[15 : 00] And a horse, it's a vain hope for deliverance despite all of its great strength it cannot save. But, the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear him.

on those whose hope is in his unfailing love. Amen. To what end are his eyes upon those who fear? To deliver them from death and to keep them alive in famine.

So the fear of the Lord opens up this storehouse and the deliverance that comes when we're looking to the Lord and the fear of him and the awe of him as our savior.

He gives it. So a couple chapters later in Isaiah 36 and 37 we find King Hezekiah, King of Judah, still in troubling times but now instead of turning to Egypt or their money they're turning to the Lord for deliverance.

And the enemy is no less powerful than he had been before. He's still threatening to destroy them. He even boasts no other gods of the nations has been able to deliver his land from the hand of the Assyrians.

[16 : 10] How then can the Lord deliver Jerusalem from my hand? Well, the Lord's going to show him how, isn't he? Because they're looking to the Lord in fear, trusting in him and looking to him for deliverance.

And so the Lord says to King Hezekiah, I'm going to put a spirit in him so that when he hears a certain report he'll return to his own country and there I'll have him cut down with a sword. And that night the angel of the Lord went out and put to death 185,000 men in the Assyrian camp.

And when the people got up the next morning there were all the dead bodies. So Sennacherib, king of Assyria, broke camp and withdrew. He returned to Nineveh and stayed there. There's your answer.

Sennacherib, how can the Lord deliver Jerusalem from my hand? That's how. He delivers those who fear him and who put their hope in his unfailing love.

And so one day while King Sennacherib was worshiping in the temple of his god Nisroch, his own sons cut him down with a sword. So this is the Lord, our Lord.

[17 : 18] And whatever the times we live in and troubling times they be, he's a sure foundation for our times to hold us up in troubles that we not be moved.

He's a rich store of deliverance, salvation, wisdom, knowledge. And with the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure we enter into the fullness of all that he is and is for us.

So let's build our life and all of our hopes for good upon this sure foundation of Christ. By faith, let's live more upon the rich storehouses that Christ is.

You know it's possible to possess great riches and yet not live upon those riches as we could. Instead, to be leaning on our own understanding when all the while we have this rich store of wisdom and knowledge and salvation.

Millionaires can live as paupers, can't they? If not tapping into their rich storehouse. And sadly, we Christians too sometimes don't live up to the rich storehouse that is ours in Christ.

[18 : 26] This is an encouragement to us. Whatever the times, by the fear of the Lord we come and we worship him and we draw from him all that we need.

Let's confess our faith in song that the Lord is this rich store of salvation for us. We'll sing the Lord is my salvation. Let's pray.

We thank you, Lord, that the greatest victory has already been won at Calvary for us. thank you that you're returning to mop up all your enemies and put them under your feet and bring in a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness for your people.

Thank you that you are the sure foundation for our times. Whatever those times may be, would you teach us then to put our hope in you and to lean hard upon your wisdom, your riches, your understanding and not our own to stand in awe of you and to seek what we need in you and so to find it and that to the end that you would be praised as our salvation, our deliverer day by day.

Help us in our homes, help us in our jobs, help us in our community, help us in our church. Our eyes are upon you. Be merciful to us even as we put our hope in your unfailing love.

[19 : 56] We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.