

His Foundation

Building a house. It can be one of the greatest experiences of our life...or the worst. We have probably all have heard a couple say something like, “building this house was nearly our ruin.” Kris and I raised our kids in lots of houses, at least 12 - base housing to be exact, you know, the government ‘projects’ 850-1500 sq-ft of neighbor on top of neighbor – this went on for the first 18 years of our marriage. So, when we finally had a chance to build a home...it was very exciting. I remember driving by a home in our neighborhood. It was the first one you’d see as one entered our neighborhood; beautiful, modest, clean lines, simple architecture, impeccable detail. I remember thinking, “hope ours is all those things.” A number of years later, I saw heavy equipment all around the house...for weeks on end. I couldn’t imagine what all that equipment could be doing. I asked my neighbor. He said, “foundation, bad foundation. They built on unstable soil.” “Wow, that must be complicated to fix,” I asked. “Yep,” he said, “and very expensive.”

Our foundations are like our house’s foundation...they must be True, unshakable, unmoving, sticking to a well designed and engineered Master Plan...lest when the “shakers or tremors” of life rattle...we will crack and maybe even fall.

In our reading from Malachi, we are reminded of the story of Esau and Jacob...the twin brothers – grandsons of Abraham – sons of Rebekah and Isaac. There are many lessons that can be gleaned from their story, but for today, we will focus on God’s Master Plan and how we are to fit into His plan, not the other way around. Per the culture of Jacob and Esau’s time, the first born received the birth rights (that’s ancient-world-talk for twice the inheritance). But God had a different plan, “...the older (Esau) will serve the younger (Jacob)” declares God to Rebekah, their mother. Sure enough, Esau ended-up selling his birth right to Jacob (fulfilling God’s prophecy). Afterward, reeling with regret, Esau tried to modify the Master Plan and “work himself back into the birth right inheritance” by whining and pleading with his dad Isaac to no avail.

The Romans reading further accentuates this matter with Paul telling his readers something very similar. Paul is telling us that “Israel” is not the same as all of Israel. “Abraham’s children” are not the same as all his descendants. The “children of God” are not the same as the children of flesh. No matter how much we try to rationalize these matters, re-write God’s plans...Israel, Abraham’s children, the children of God depend on God’s plan, His plan...not ours.

Lastly, in Luke, Jesus is reminding us we can “whine” all we want...kinda like when Esau whined to Isaac trying to get his birthright back. But in true Jesus form of parable and metaphor...you can build the mightiest of house,

but if your plans aren't commensurate with God's plans – if you've hired false-architects and false-engineers – your construction project will crumble.

So how did this manifest itself through Jacob and Esau? The answer to that hinges on the seemingly odd use of the word “hate.”

Love and hate are used in these verses within the context of election...not the more commonly associated human emotions of love and hate. In this context of love / hate, God might have just as easily said to Abraham, “out of all the men on earth at this particular time, I love you, Abraham (choose Abraham) and hate all other men (do not choose them).” God is declaring the same type of love / hate with Jacob and Esau... “I – God – choose you Jacob (love) and I do not choose you Esau (hate).” Years before, God used a similar election with Isaac, Jacob and Esau's dad, “I choose you Isaac (love) and do not choose (hate) your half-brother Ismael.”

Well that kinda talk can get us all worked-up. It kinda hits our “fairness” nerve, right? We don't like it when the plans are dictated to us...but we need to remember, it's not our Kingdom, it's His.

How's this for us “fairness” score keepers? God immensely blessed the descendants of Esau (they were called the Edomites) and Ismael (Isaac's half-brother, they were called the Ishmaelites) with both lines giving rise to great nations. Esau was so blessed that he and Jacob had to come to agreement on who went ‘which way’ with all of their stuff (blessings)

because they both had so much. But here's where the "foundation" fails ... the Ishmaelite kingdom and Edomite kingdom were built on the foundations of false gods and crumbled.

Fair enough, but how does this apply today? Come on Dave, we don't do birth rights anymore, we don't live in Israel, we don't claim any special genetic lineage to Abraham, we all consider ourselves children of God, right? Yes, I imagine we do. But what kind of a foundation are we all working with under our faith? Is our foundation built upon the promise from the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob...or do we also entertain other gods? Now I suppose that if I walked into your house or you into mine...we probably would not find some altar to some pagan god. But that does not mean we do not have them just like the Edomites and Ishmaelites.

Chances are, we all have our own mini-false-gods. Most of the time, these mini-false-gods do not cause our whole house to crumble, but they are certainly doing damage to our foundation, year-after-year weakening our foundation. Acquire too many of them and/or too much of one or another...and our house will fall.

There's a lot of foundations being shaken right now. Many of our neighbors, family members and country-men are cracking. There is no shortage to list...I'm gonna throw out a few, I'm sure you see additional. As I run through this list, hear Jesus' words regarding our identity, who we are

called / elected to be, “You are the light of the world. A city set (built on a solid foundation) on a hill cannot be hidden...it gives light to all in the house...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to (God).”

It’s a pretty volatile environment in America right now. Many foundations are cracking. In fact, some of us might have a crack or two showing? It takes a strong, unshakable, True people, to be that Light Of The World. What are some of these gods that are cracking the foundations? Recall a god is that which we look for refuge in times of trouble and expect good things to come. These false gods create the cults of our minds.

Here’s a couple cults that I see. As I read this list, if I strike a nerve, it’s ok, this list hit a couple nerves in me too. Ready? Here goes: the cult of Joe, the cult of Donald, the cult of Kamala, the cult of Mike. The cult of identity, pronoun, excessive sensitivity politics. The cult of social media and writing that pious hateful nasty gram to just get it off our chest, push send, then walk away, vindicated to only add fuel to the smoldering fire. The cult of personal looks, wealth, status. The cult of inclusion, tolerance and acceptance but only if that inclusion, tolerance and acceptance meets “our” definition. The cult of tabloids, news, gossip, porn. The cult of convenience vice honoring all life. The cult of what kind of life matters.

As I wrote this list, I asked myself, with all of these cults living in my foundation, how in the Hell is my house not in shambles? I'm getting to that!

Now do not think that God did not desire for the descendants of both Ishmael (the nomadic peoples of Arabia) or the descendants of Esau (the Edomites) to worship Him...He gave them plenty of chances and abundant blessings...rather they chose to reject the God of Creation and chose to worship their gods of human manifestation. Cults of their worldly choosing, gods of faulty and temporary 'refuge and good.'

The Creator's grace and providential care is as clearly visible today as it was then. Matthew chapter 5 reminds us, "For He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust." Now that's about as 'fair' as it can get! God's promise to "make it all right again ... to do all that we cannot do for ourselves ... to return us to a just and righteous relationship with Him was made to all people all the way back in Genesis chapter 3 when He promised to fix that which we had screwed-up. Hear the words from 2 Peter, "The Lord is not slow to fulfill His promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but all should reach repentance." Yet, in God's reality, in God's building plans, there is a time limit that only He knows. Time ran out on the Ishmaelites and Edomites.

What are we called to be in all this madness we are seeing today? Are we to be like the Edomites and Ishmaelites? Nope. We are as Martin Luther said, to be a strange and peculiar people, *The Light of The World*. 2 Peter records it like this, “Therefore brothers (and sisters), be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election, for if you practice these qualities you will never fail.” And what might these qualities be? Galatians 5:22 is a great place to start, “...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control...not conceited, provoking, or envying...”

Our neighbors, family members and countrymen are looking for solid foundations. You are all built on that foundation. You lead them by example in exactly the manner Jesus asked you to, “let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works...giving glory to your Father (the master architect and engineer).” And when we stumble - when they stumble - what a powerful grace and Holy Spirit teaching moment. Not only are we fully forgiven, but our desire to be “righteous” is out of response to what Christ has done. We desire to live God pleasing lives in response to the abundant grace offered in the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Yes, brothers and sisters, there is a Master Plan. The master carpenter, the Man with the plan, God in the flesh made it very clear, “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life and no one comes to the Father except through me.”

We are called, elected, to participate in that plan and NOT allow the mini-gods and cults of this world to dim His light in us. Our actions. Our examples. Our speech, written and spoken. Our character, tone, inflection...all these things and more are to reflect Him.

Indeed, our world is getting rocked by a series of 4.0 tremors-of-life and cracks are forming in many people’s drywall...and maybe our drywall as well. Now is the time to fully live His Master Plan, His blue-print. Those around us need that “light” of peace, self-control, Truth, and non-provoking!

See, like it or not, the great earthquake of all earthquakes is coming for all of us ... the one earthquake that all humans have in common ... bodily death, the first death. There is but One foundation that will endure that 10.0. In Christ, a lousy foundation can be fixed ... sometimes it is very costly ... but until we draw that final breath ... there He is, standing by to jack-up that faulty foundation, replace the lousy soils, and pour-you a life abundant eternal foundation of the True-est concrete. Our foundation repair will never be too expensive...it has been bought with the highest of price.

In Christ’s name, Amen.