

Standing on the Rock



By Rev. Robert Busse

Opening Hymn: “How Firm a Foundation” *LSB* #728;
TLH #427; *LW* #411

Spring has arrived and if not started yet, soon new home construction, additions, and road construction will be popping up all over the place. Winter frost and summer heat bring stress to those structures. What effects do these stresses have if building is not done on a firm foundation?

Our spiritual “building” must also be laid on a firm foundation. Otherwise, when trials come against us, they will threaten to heave and crack our faith.

Read Matthew 7:24–27 (or Luke 6:46–49).

To what does the “house” refer? On what “sands” do people sometimes build their faith? What are some of the “rains, floods, and winds” that beat on our faith?

When built on these “sands,” what happens to our faith when these storms come?

What is the “rock” on which the standing house was built? (**Read 1 Corinthians 3:11 and 1 Corinthians 10:1–4.**)

How does the Christian react to these storms? How do we “build” on that rock? (**Read Psalm 19:14 and Psalm 62:2, 6.**) The Psalms verses tell us that the Rock is our salvation. Our salvation is not of our own doing. (**Read Ephesians 2:8–9.**)

So we don’t actually “build” our “houses” — they’re given to us. How does the house get built then, if we don’t do it? (**Read Romans 10:17.**) Our “house builder” builds the house on Himself and then gives it to us. Although we don’t participate in building our own spiritual houses, we may be “hired” as laborers in the building of others’ houses.

Read Colossians 1:24–29.

Paul labored (verse 29), but it was a “stewardship” from God in which he labored (verse 25). Paul found great joy in laboring for Christ in building the Church. But think about Paul’s ministry in Acts; almost everywhere he went, people were harassing him. If they weren’t stoning him, they were dragging him before local courts. When he went down to Jerusalem, the Jews blasted him for preaching to the Greeks. He ended up in prison.

Sometimes we get tired working for the Lord. We say, “I’ve done it for enough years. Let someone else take over. People don’t seem to appreciate what I do anyway. They don’t listen. I can’t afford to help. I live on a fixed income. I have kids to put through college. Others can afford to help out more than I.”

The list can go on and on. When we start to feel this way, how are these verses helpful?

Joy in the midst of suffering is a key characteristic of discipling others — of leading others to the Rock.

Read Philippians 1:25 and 2 Corinthians 2:2–4.

Rather than whining and complaining that he is in prison suffering, Paul is rejoicing to be working for God and for God’s people. John MacArthur wrote: “People lose their joy when they become self-centered, thinking they deserve better circumstances or treatment than they are getting.” How can we teach, disciple, counsel, and minister to each another so as to lead God’s people into deeper and fuller measures of joy?

Think about it: We have a Christ who promises forgiveness of sins and eternal life, but if we’re walking around looking like we’ve just eaten a dill pickle, our witness for Him may not be as effective.

We have a responsibility to be stewards in the Body of Christ — His house. A steward carries out the wishes of the owner. How might you “labor for the Lord,” building houses of faith? What can you do to get the Word of God out to people so they can learn and grow and change and mature in the joy of the Lord ...

- ❖ in your own home?
- ❖ in your congregation?
- ❖ in your LWML group?
- ❖ in your community?
- ❖ elsewhere?

We don’t labor to increase the number of women who attend our meetings or to be able to contribute more mite offerings. What should be our motivation as we labor?

We proclaim a person — not the Law, not opinions, not traditions, not a philosophy, not tips for healthier living. We proclaim Jesus Christ, and we proclaim it to EVERY person. Those who are not believers need to hear the Gospel message in order to come to faith, and those who are believers need to hear the Word in order to grow in their faith.

Our purpose is not to fill officer positions or to make people “feel religious.” We are builders who disciple and prepare others so that they, too, can build upon the Rock.

This brings us full circle. To keep working for the Lord — to lead others to the Rock — we need to remember that we need HIM. We, too, need to be built on the Rock — and stand firm on the Rock — in order to lead others to the Rock. Those He builds — using us — will then lead even more to the Rock, and so His kingdom is built.

Closing: Close with prayer, asking that our Savior builds you solidly upon Himself. Ask also that He gives you the eyes to see other “houses” that need building. Ask for His strength so that you may be good and faithful members of His “construction crew.”

Sing or speak the hymn “Built on the Rock” *LSB* #645; *TLH* #467; *LW* #291 (verses 1, 3, 5).

Rev. Robert Busse grew up on a dairy farm between Abbotsford and Dorchester, Wisconsin. After receiving an education degree in mathematics, he worked the family farm and taught middle/high school math in Abbotsford, Tomah, and Clintonville, Wisconsin, before entering Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, in the Alternate Route program. Pastor Busse has served Calvary Lutheran Church, Princeton, Wisconsin, since March 2002, first as vicar and currently as pastor. Having served as South Wisconsin LWML District counselor from 2004–2008, Rev. Busse currently serves as a zone counselor. Bob and his wife, Carol, have four grown children.