

Wings

*“Those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles.”
Isaiah 40:31*



April 23, 2017

The Solid Foundation

The essence of Christianity is not all that hard to understand, once we grasp two fundamental truths about the relationship between God and man.

“Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: ‘The Lord knows those who are His,’ and, ‘Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.’” (2 Tim. 2:19).



Darkness and gloom hang heavy over Paul’s last letter to Timothy. False teachers lurk about—*beware!* (2:16-18; 3:1-9). Friends will stab you in the back or let you down—*don’t give up!* (1:15; 4:14-16). People won’t listen to our message—*keep on teaching!* (4:3-5). It’s hard to keep your spirits up in that kind of environment.

But in the middle of this letter Paul lays out two simple principles that together form the bedrock upon which we can stand firm in our faith, especially in such troubled times. Let’s examine the two pillars that comprise this “solid foundation.”

“The Lord knows those who are His.” The first pillar emphasizes God’s omniscient faithfulness. Humans are very good at fooling others, and even deceiving themselves. But God cannot

be fooled. He sees what others cannot see, and has a perfect understanding of who is really on His side and who is merely pretending. Nobody will pull a fast one on God, so it is pointless for me to try to play the hypocrite. God knows the truth about my heart and my life, and that fact keeps me honest and on target.

Likewise, if God knows those who are His, then it really doesn’t matter what others think of me. Their criticisms and attacks cannot touch my salvation. The opinions of my enemies on this or that issue—even if they number in the millions—do not change in the slightest what God has revealed in His word. So if I consistently look to His word for truth, I can reject with confidence the efforts of those who would try to push me in a different direction. “The Lord knows” can be a powerful talisman in warding off temptation.

“Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.” The second pillar addresses my own contribution to the relationship. It is not enough merely to profess faith in Christ. I must be committed to the “new life”

God desires for me. I must take seriously the meaning of my confession, and let His word shape my heart and life. Oh, I’ll make my share of mistakes along the way, but I can never become complacent about the task before me. Resolve, self-denial, sacrifice, endurance—these are the raw ingredients I must bring to the table if I wish to wear the name of God’s Son. If I ever settle into a careless attitude about sin, I’ve denied the One who died to free me from its deadly grip.

Alone, neither of these pillars can bear the weight of sin and failure that burdens my life. The real strength comes from the symbiotic manner in which they reinforce each other. God knows my deepest motives, despite my stumbles; and I know that God’s grace does not grant me a license to sin. I do the best I can, and God’s mercy accepts my imperfect performance as righteousness.

My life will be one long program of continuous improvement, always studying, learning, growing into a deeper relationship with God. But it’s this foundation of God’s grace and my persistent faith that makes that life possible.

– David King