

Grounded in Truth

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung – 8/10/2013

Are you grounded in the truth? Unless every one of us is grounded in the truth, we are not going to make it when things really get rough at the time of the tribulation. There will not be any exceptions to this rule. We are all aware that the Church was **founded** on Jesus Christ – the Rock. Jesus said:

Matthew 16:

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

John 8:

32 And ye shall **know** the **truth**, and the truth shall make you free.

“**The Word of God is the Foundation of Knowledge**” was inscribed in stone in Ambassador Hall – the Loma D. Armstrong Academic Center.

Luke 11:

28 says in part ...Blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.

To be **Grounded in Truth**, we must **hear**, **know** and **do** the Word of God.

Hearing alone is insufficient. **Knowing** by heart is not enough. And, if we don't know the Word of God we can't **do** it!

James 1:

22 But be ye **doers** of the word, and not **hearers** only, deceiving your own selves.

We will see that this is why so many are **deceived** today.

James 1:

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24 For he beholds himself, and goes his way, and straightway forgets what manner of man he was.

No change takes place in the man. He has not put on the required **Character of God** that is necessary to be in the Kingdom of God.

James 1:

25 But whoso looks into the perfect law of liberty, and continues therein, he being not a forgetful **hearer**, but a **doer** of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

So the Holy Scriptures are quite clear: To be **Founded in Truth**, we must hear, know and do the Word of God. King David was an inspired Prophet of God.

Psalms 19:

7 The law of the LORD is perfect, **converting the soul**: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple.

The **Word** of God is Spiritual – and it has the capability of changing our lives – “**converting the soul.**” No one can remain in a sinful state.

Psalms 19:

8 The **statutes** of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the **commandment** of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes.

How else could we **see** the way to **Truth**?

Psalm 119:

97 O how love I thy law! It is my meditation all the day.

Psalm 19:

9 The reverence of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.

Absolutely everything we need to **hear**, **know** and **do** are right here in the Holy Scriptures. Nothing is more important!

Psalm 19:

10 More to be desired are they [The Words of God] than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.

11 Moreover by them [The Words of God] is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward.

Great reward, Yes, we are looking for the Kingdom of God. Everything else is superfluous. Isaiah wrote in:

Isaiah 8:

20 To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to **this word**, it is because there is no light in them.

This **Word** is not speaking of the “letter of the Law” but of the **Spirit of God’s Law**, the Intent of God’s Law.

OK, I think that we all agree on this principle of being **Grounded in Truth**. We need to be grounded in truth with ourselves and with God.

Specific Purpose Statement: I fear that the Church of God has become **deficient** in the **full** teachings of Jesus Christ as conveyed to us by Jesus and through the teachings of the apostles.

I do not say this lightly. What is so disturbing is that **all** the Church brethren have **heard** the Word of God. And a great many of the Church brethren **know** well the Word of God.

With that being the case, why then won’t the ministers of the various groups bury the hatchet and come together?

At the very time that **all** should be pulling together, we find old grudges and factions continuing. Why is that? It is because there remains a **grievous** sin in the Church of God that is at the root of all this scattering, separation, hurt and division. In today’s sermon, I want to try and define what the problem is. Everyone knows that there are some deep seated problems in the Church.

Our word for today is “**dispense**.” Dispense means to deal out, distribute, give out or dole out. When you go to McDonalds or any fast food outlet you find that they use a lot of **dispensers**. Drink dispensers, napkin dispensers, coffee and ketchup dispensers.

Used as an Adjective we have the word **dispensable**. Dispensable means, Able to be replaced or done without; superfluous. When a person is dispensable – it means that he or she is optional – unnecessary – expendable.

I believe that there exists within the leadership of God’s Church an underlying concept that those of the rank and file membership are **dispensable**.

That is a bold statement – I know it – but I have been trying to put my finger on why it is that we are such a scattered people – and why there is such atrocious disregard for the spiritual welfare of the brethren by the church leadership in general.

Luke 14:

26 If any man come to me, and **hate** not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

We were all taught that the word “hate” means to **love less** by comparison – never-the-less, that unfortunate translation allows a degree of condescension to enter our church narrative. God’s Word says:

Exodus 20:

12 Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God gives you.

You love God first – and then you love your parents as well.

Exodus 20:

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

If God is not **FIRST** in everything – it is **idolatry** (plain and simple).

You have to admit that within the Church of God community there have always been those who **disparage** and **look down** on those who are not in the church.

There are those in the Church who are contemptuous of those in the world. That is wrong – because except for the grace of God, and our being called out of the world – there go you or I. We are not to belittle anyone. We are not to **disparage** those in the world.

And unfortunately, this disparaging and denigrating attitude of others exists in the ministry of God’s Church – toward the *lowly* brethren. (As they would view the brethren) Jesus died for all:

John 3:

17 For God sent **not** his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.

Somewhere along the line a great number of ministers in church leadership came to look down on **any and all** that they perceived to be a threat to their political corporate organization.

The answer was always the same – put them out – disfellowship them.

God’s people are **not dispensable**. God’s people are **indispensable**.

Indispensable, on the other hand means, absolutely necessary and essential.

Revelation 17:

14 ...They that are with him [The Lamb, Jesus Christ] are called, and chosen, and faithful.

That is how God looks at things:

Matthew 18:

10 Take heed that ye **despise not** one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

The ministry is **NOT** supposed to lord it over the brethren – and the ministry does not have dominion over our faith.

Matthew 20:

- 25** ...You know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise **dominion** over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.
- 26** But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your **servant**.

2 Corinthians 1:

- 24** The ministers do not have **dominion** over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

Matthew 18:

- 11** For the Son of man is come to **save** that which was lost.

...Not to get rid of them as though they were **dispensable** as so many ministers seem to believe.

Matthew 18:

- 12** What do you think? If a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goes into the mountains, and seeks that which is gone astray?
- 13** And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoices more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

The ministry of God's Church should have a mind to **recover** those little ones. ...Not to drive them away.

Matthew 18:

- 14** Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

God's people are **indispensable**. God never says, "Forget you!"

What do you believe God thinks of those ministers who in a wholesale manner disfellowshipped the faithful brethren who refused to follow the Tkaches into the apostasy?

The same ministers are church leaders yet today.

Recently they cut-off every last member in South America for the specific reason that they were in the sub-continent of South America. Was there **not one little lamb** that was worthy of their time or attention? What does it mean to these ministers when they read this verse:

Matthew 18:

- 14** Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

I believe one would be wise to question that leadership. And, we would be wise to examine ourselves to see if we are indeed **grounded in truth**.

I believe that we have come to a point in Church history where the ministry is in a siege mentality to protect their political corporate organizations at any cost. Their thinking is wrong – and it goes something like this:

They set up their corporations ostensibly to represent God, and His way. But quickly, in a slight of hand maneuver, they have people look to their political corporate organization – **rather than to God** and His perfect way.

The political corporate organization becomes **supreme** – instead of God! And you do not cross headquarters – or you are out.

When one looks to the headquarters of an organization to determine his course of action – instead of looking to **God and His Word as supreme** – they are engaging in **Idolatry**.

Brethren, we are not serving God **above all** when we are playing the game and kowtowing to an organization. That is the sin of idolatry!

WHEN do we serve God? That is an important question. And like all important questions we go to the Bible for the answer. **We serve God when we are serving one another according to the Word of God.**

1 John 4:

20 If a man say, I love God, and hates his brother, he is a liar: for he that loves not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

What indicates to Jesus Christ that we are living our Christian lives the way he wants us to? We honor and serve God **as we serve and care for others**. Our primary responsibility on this earth is to **serve Jesus Christ** by serving others.

Matthew 25:

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, **ye have done it unto me.**

Laying down our lives for one another is **NOT** optional. We must always be doing everything within our power to help others to attain the Kingdom of God. We must ask ourselves, "Am I founded and rooted in Jesus Christ?"

It is easy to say, "My foundation is in Jesus Christ," but what does that exactly mean? Would we know if we were not grounded and rooted in Christ?

There is a requirement for a Christian to obey the commandments and laws of God if he is to be **founded in Christ**.

It should go without saying that a right understanding of how to live a Christian life is based on the life of Jesus Christ.

In the book of Colossians, Paul tells us that when we are rooted in Christ our ways will become **like His ways**. If we were not rooted in Christ, how would we know it? There was a situation in the life of Christ just like the one we are discussing today.

The Pharisees were the big ministers uptown who ran headquarters and had the power to kick the people out who they did not approve of.

John 8:

31 Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye **continue in my word**, then are ye my disciples indeed;

Romans 6:

16 Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?

John 8:

32 And ye shall know the **truth**, and the truth shall make you free.

That is why we must be **Grounded in Truth**.

John 8:

- 33** They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free?
- 34** Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.
- 35** And the servant abideth not in the house for ever: but the Son abideth ever.
- 36** If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.
- 37** I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you.
- 38** I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.
- 39** They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham.

A father is someone who children pattern themselves after. The pattern in the life of Abraham was faith in Jesus – which the Pharisees lacked.

John 8:

- 40** But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham.
- 41** Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.
- 42** Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.
- 43** Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word.

Brethren, The Pharisees kept the Sabbath – didn't eat unclean food, observed the holy days, etc – **BUT** they did **not understand** Christianity – Jesus' words! Does the ministry today understand what Christianity is?

Then Jesus went on to tell them that they were following Satan and not God. We contradict our faith with our lives when we do not put our Christian principles into effect. The Jews were claiming to live like God and yet they were not doing so. This I think is the hardest hitting of all the lies we might tell ourselves. We who claim to be Godly, are we? Do our lives match the words that are coming out of our mouths? Do we truly love our neighbor as ourselves?

In Chapter Two of Colossians, Paul clearly teaches what it means to be complete in Christ now. He illustrates that the true Christian will be living by every word of God.

Colossians 2:

- 6** *“As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him:*
- 7** ***Rooted and built up in Him**, and established in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”*

Being rooted in Christ, means that we embrace His doctrine, His Law, His principles, His teachings, and His values. A firm and right connection to Christ includes trusting in all of His words, and greatly appreciating the forgiveness He earned for us. It also includes looking to God in faith, realizing our total dependence on our Creator while demonstrating the fruits of God's Holy Spirit, and expressing true Christianity through good works.

When we are becoming **founded and rooted in Christ**, it means that we know and love His ways more than the ways of the world. We **put on** Christ when we are being created in righteousness and true holiness.

Romans 13:

14 Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.

Galatians 3:

27 As many of you as have been baptized into Christ have **put on Christ**.

Ephesians 4:

24 Put on the new man, which after God is **created in righteousness and true holiness**.

If we are **grounded in truth** we will be doing what Jesus Christ says!

Jesus prayed:

John 17:

11 Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, **that they may be one, as we are**.

The reason for the separation in the Church of God, even after so many years, attests to the fact that there are those who have not yet become founded and rooted in Christ as they should be.

If Jesus were to return physically today – would He favor one political corporate organization and exclude all the other brethren?

It is simply unfathomable to have true Church of God brethren existing side by side, while ignoring each other's very existence as brothers and sisters of Christ.

Because of the reluctance of the various off-shoots of the scattered brethren to work toward harmony, you would think that we had **all the time in the world**. It is high time that all the converted brethren who are founded and rooted in Christ pull together and recognize one another – despite which political corporate organization they find themselves in.

When we are all truly walking in Christ as we should be, a right fellowship of the body will be the sure outcome. That is because when we look to God – and draw near to God – we will find ourselves right next to others who are drawing near to God.

Make no mistake about it – Jesus Christ is not going to return to a scattered bunch of churches. If we claim that we are not worldly, but spiritually founded and rooted in Christ, then we must admit that all this church **party spirit** we see all around us is wrong.

What are we to do about the problem? The answer is that we must be instrumental in healing the breach. **Take a stand!** Recognize your brothers and sisters in other groups who have a right relationship with God. Reestablish a fellowship that is pleasing to Jesus Christ.

Yes, the Bible reveals that there are many false ministers that the brethren are to be careful of – they are not rooted and founded in Jesus Christ. Have the **courage** to do what God requires of us.

Our task is not to find the single corporate organization that Christ is fully pleased with – it does not exist on earth. Every true Christian's task is to be firmly grounded in Jesus Christ.

Brethren, it is time to be firmly **grounded in Truth**. **Tthat means we are to be grounded** in our faith in Christ, and thoroughly instructed and established in the True **doctrines of Christ**.

Colossians 1:

23 If ye continue in the faith **grounded** and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the gospel, which ye have heard, and which was preached to every creature which is under heaven; whereof I Paul am made a minister;

The hope of the gospel is the resurrection to eternal life. Paul wrote:

Colossians 1:

27 ...Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Being **rooted in Christ**, means that we embrace His doctrine, His principles, His teachings, and His values. A deep-rooted connection to Christ includes trusting in all of His words, and greatly appreciating the forgiveness He earned for us. It also includes looking to God in faith, realizing our total dependence on our Creator while demonstrating the fruits of God's Holy Spirit, and expressing true Christianity through good works.

Colossians 3:

10 And have **put on the new man**, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him [Jesus Christ] that created him:

When we are **rooted in Christ**, it means that we know His ways, and love His ways more than the ways of the world. Being **deeply rooted in Christ** allows us to draw from God's wisdom and power - transforming us into mature spiritual beings capable of producing the required spiritual fruit. We need that nourishment from Him to grow.

Paul explains that if we are not connected to Christ, the head of the body – we cannot grow. That is because we are united together in His body by strong connections whereby we are supplied our nourishment and strength.

In Ephesians **3**, Paul equates being rooted and grounded in love, with Christ dwelling in our hearts through faith. God, through His Holy Spirit **helps us** to comprehend the intent of His words, and thus be able to properly and adequately **implement them in our lives**.

Ephesians 3:

- 14** For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
- 15** Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,
- 16** That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by His Spirit **in the inner man**; [that is who we really are]
- 17** That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith; that ye, **being rooted and grounded** in [Godly] love,
- 18** May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;
- 19** And to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge, that ye might be **filled with all the fullness of God**.
- 20** Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, [God's Holy Spirit]
- 21** Unto him be glory, **in the church**, by **Christ Jesus** throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

When we are Grounded in **Truth and rooted in Christ**, we **put on Christ** - we become like Him, we serve Him – by serving one another.

End: Grounded in Truth