

# **THE FOUNDATIONS OF CHRIST**

*The Elementary Principles of the Doctrine of  
Christ*

Idowu O. Babalola

# Copyright

Copyright © 2026 Idowu O. Babalola

All rights reserved.

No part of this book may be reproduced, stored, or transmitted in any form or by any means, whether electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without prior written permission from the author, except for brief quotations used in reviews or other uses permitted by law.

Scripture quotations are from the Holy Bible. Where a specific translation is identified in the text, the quotation follows that translation.

First edition, 2026

# Dedication

This book is first and foremost dedicated to the Father, through whom are all things; to the Lord Jesus Christ, the foundation and perfect revelation of our faith; and to the Holy Spirit, who leads us into all truth and enables us to live the life of Christ.

I lovingly dedicate this work to my beloved wife, Babalola Adebusola Faith, whose steadfast love, prayers, encouragement, and partnership have been a continual source of strength throughout this journey.

To my precious children, Babalola Tijesu Joshua and Babalola Eden Titoluwa, may your lives always be built upon Christ, the sure foundation. May you learn from your earliest days to depend upon God rather than yourselves, walking by faith and living for His eternal purpose.

This book is also dedicated to every believer who desires to leave behind a life of self-dependence and enter into the life of faith through Jesus Christ. May these pages help establish you upon the unshakable foundation of Christ and lead you into a deeper knowledge of Him.

“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” — 1 Corinthians 15:58 (NKJV)

# Preface

The Christian life is not built upon human effort but upon the life of God revealed through Jesus Christ. Before we can build well, we must understand the foundation upon which God intends us to build.

Hebrews 5:12-6:2 speaks about believers who should have progressed toward maturity but were still struggling with the elementary truths of the faith. The writer then names six foundational principles: repentance from dead works, faith toward God, the doctrine of baptisms, laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.

These principles may appear elementary, but elementary does not mean unimportant. A foundation is often unseen, yet the strength of everything built upon it depends on whether that foundation is sound. The same is true of the Christian life. If our understanding of repentance, faith, our identity in Christ, responsibility, resurrection, and eternal judgment is weak, that weakness will eventually affect the way we live.

This concise edition was prepared for readers who want to encounter these foundations in a shorter and more accessible form. It does not attempt to say everything that can be said about each subject. Instead, it brings the six principles together in a single movement so that the reader can see how they connect and how they lead toward Christian maturity.

The movement is important. Repentance turns us away from confidence in dead works. Faith turns us toward God. Our identification with Christ changes the centre from which we live. Participation in God's work brings responsibility. Resurrection gives us hope beyond death.

Eternal judgment reminds us that our lives are lived before God and carry significance beyond the present age.

My prayer is that this book will not merely add information to your understanding of Christianity. I pray that these foundations will become realities in your life: that you will depend more fully upon Christ, walk by the Spirit, serve faithfully, hold firmly to the hope of resurrection, and live with eternity in view.

If you are new to these truths, I hope this book gives you a clear place to begin. If you have known them for years, I hope it helps you see them again with fresh understanding. And if you desire a more extended study, the expanded edition of *The Foundations of Christ* develops these same foundations in greater depth. The foundation is Christ, and everything that follows in the Christian life must remain rooted in Him.

# Table of Contents

|                                                                                 |     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|
| Copyright.....                                                                  | i   |
| Dedication.....                                                                 | ii  |
| Preface.....                                                                    | iii |
| Introduction — The Foundation That Cannot<br>Be Ignored.....                    | 1   |
| Chapter 1 — Repentance from Dead Works.....                                     | 6   |
| Chapter 2 — Faith Toward God.....                                               | 13  |
| Chapter 3 — Baptisms: Identification with Christ and Life<br>in the Spirit..... | 20  |
| Chapter 4 — Laying on of Hands: Participation and<br>Responsibility.....        | 30  |
| Chapter 5 — The Resurrection of the Dead.....                                   | 40  |
| Chapter 6 — Eternal Judgment.....                                               | 51  |
| Conclusion — Living on the Foundation.....                                      | 64  |
| Going Deeper.....                                                               | 67  |
| About the Author.....                                                           | 68  |
| Connect with the Author.....                                                    | 70  |

## **Introduction**

# **The Foundation That Cannot Be Ignored**

### **Maturity Does Not Mean Novelty**

The call to maturity in Hebrews also guards against the idea that spiritual depth must always mean discovering something new. There is a tendency in Christian life to move quickly toward what is unusual while neglecting what is foundational. Yet the writer of Hebrews does not solve immaturity by replacing the foundation with more impressive subjects. He calls believers to become established enough in the truth that it can support a mature life.

A believer may hear the same truth about grace many times and still need it when pride is exposed. He may know that God is trustworthy and still need that truth when an answer is delayed. He may know that he belongs to Christ and still need to remember it when temptation comes. He may understand stewardship and still need it when responsibility increases. The truth has not become less valuable because it is familiar. Its value is seen when it becomes the way we respond.

The following chapters are not an attempt to make the elementary principles complicated. They are an attempt to see why these principles matter enough to govern the rest of Christian life. The deeper we go, the more these truths should move from information into conviction, and from conviction into practice.

## **Why These Foundations Are Called Elementary**

The order also keeps us from separating doctrine from the life it is meant to produce. Repentance without faith can become endless regret. Faith without identification with Christ can remain an idea about God rather than a life joined to Christ. Identification without responsibility can become a private experience that never serves others. Responsibility without resurrection can become driven by immediate results, while resurrection without judgment can be misunderstood as hope without accountability. Hebrews places these truths together because each one gives context to the others.

The foundations deserve careful attention even for believers who have heard them before. We are not returning to them because there is nothing else to learn. We are returning because everything else we learn must eventually be lived on this foundation. The purpose of this book is therefore not to make the reader feel that he has completed another Christian study. It is to help him see the ground beneath the life he is building.

The word elementary can sound as though these truths belong only to the beginning of Christian life and can eventually be forgotten. Hebrews does not use the word that way. The writer is concerned that believers who have had enough time to teach others are still unable to handle the word of righteousness. Their problem is not that the foundations are too simple. Their problem is that the foundations have not produced the maturity they were meant to produce.

This helps us understand the relationship between foundation and maturity. A foundation is elementary because it is basic to everything that follows, not because it becomes unnecessary. The deeper Christian life is not built by moving away from Christ's elementary truths. It is built by allowing those truths to become increasingly settled in us. Repentance becomes a way of dealing with self-

reliance. Faith becomes the daily posture of trusting God. Identification with Christ becomes the source of our new way of living. Responsibility becomes an expression of grace rather than ambition. Resurrection gives our present life a future horizon, and eternal judgment teaches us that our choices are lived before God.

## **The Order Hebrews Gives These Foundations**

There is therefore a reason these six principles are presented in this order. They begin with the question of where we are turning from and end with the question of how we will stand before God. In between, they deal with where confidence rests, whose life we have received, what we are entrusted to do, and what lies beyond death. They describe a movement from the old centre to the new, from self-dependence to dependence upon God, and from temporary concerns toward eternal reality.

That movement is worth seeing because Christian activity can hide foundational weakness. A person may know Christian language, participate in church, serve faithfully, and even carry responsibility while still operating from self as the deepest source of confidence. The foundations expose that problem. They ask not merely whether we know Christian doctrines, but whether those doctrines have become the ground from which we think, choose, serve, endure, and hope.

There are truths in the Christian faith that are so basic that we can easily stop paying attention to them. We learn the words, hear them in sermons, and become familiar with the language. Yet familiarity can create the impression that we have understood something simply because we have heard it many times. Hebrews gives us a different picture. The foundations of Christ are elementary, but they are not disposable.

The writer of Hebrews speaks to believers who had been Christians long enough to have become teachers, yet they

still needed someone to teach them the first principles of the Word of God. Their problem was not that they had never heard the truth. They had not grown into the truth they had heard. They still needed milk when they should have been ready for solid food (Hebrews 5:12-14).

This is the setting for Hebrews 6:1-2, where the writer names six elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ: repentance from dead works, faith toward God, the doctrine of baptisms, laying on of hands, resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. He then says that we should go on to maturity.

### **Maturity Without Abandoning the Foundation**

The instruction to go on does not mean that these foundations should be left behind as though mature believers no longer need them. A building does not become mature by abandoning its foundation. It becomes mature by being built securely upon it. In the same way, Christian maturity is not a departure from the elementary truths of Christ. It is the result of becoming established in them and allowing them to shape the whole of life.

These six principles also give us a meaningful movement. Repentance deals with the direction from which we have been living. Faith teaches us where our confidence should rest. Baptisms speak of our identification with Christ and the life that comes from the Spirit. Laying on of hands brings us into participation and responsibility. Resurrection lifts our eyes beyond the present life, and eternal judgment reminds us that our lives have an eternal answer before God.

Taken together, they describe more than a list of doctrines. They show the direction of a believer's life: away from dependence upon self, toward trust in God, into a life identified with Christ, into faithful participation in God's purpose, and finally into a life governed by resurrection hope and eternal accountability.

Christian activity can grow faster than Christian understanding. A person may know how to attend meetings, pray, sing, preach, give, serve, or lead and still have an unstable foundation beneath those activities. The question is not only whether we are doing Christian things. It is whether the truth of Christ has become the basis from which we live.

The foundations therefore deserve more than familiarity. They deserve to become settled convictions. They should influence how we understand salvation, how we respond to temptation, how we serve, how we handle success and difficulty, how we think about death, and how we use the time entrusted to us.

The first foundation is repentance from dead works. It begins with a question that reaches beneath outward behaviour: what is the source from which I am living? Before faith can properly be understood, we must understand what repentance turns us away from.

## **Chapter 1**

# **Repentance from Dead Works**

### **Repentance and Grace Belong Together**

Repentance can be misunderstood when it is separated from grace. If a person thinks repentance means becoming good enough for God to accept him, he may turn repentance into another form of dead work. He may spend his life trying to repair himself and then present the repair as the reason God should receive him. The gospel takes a different approach. We turn because God has exposed the false foundation and because His grace has opened a way back to Him through Christ.

This means that repentance is neither self-hatred nor self-improvement as a means of earning acceptance. It is a truthful response to God's light. We stop defending what He is asking us to surrender. We stop excusing what He calls sin. We stop pretending that our strength can provide what only Christ can provide. Grace gives us the freedom to face the truth without having to protect an image of ourselves.

This understanding allows a person to repent honestly. Failure does not have to be hidden, because acceptance rests in Christ rather than in a perfect record. At the same time, grace does not make repentance unnecessary. Because we have been received by grace, we can allow God to correct us without running from Him. Repentance becomes part of learning to live openly before the One who gives life.

## **How Dead Works Can Hide in a Good Life**

One reason dead works are difficult to recognise is that they do not always look spiritually dangerous. Some of them may be admired by other Christians. A person can be disciplined, generous, active in church, knowledgeable in Scripture, and dependable in responsibility while quietly building confidence in what he can accomplish. The danger is not in the goodness of the activity itself. It is in allowing the activity to become a substitute for dependence upon God.

The heart must be examined alongside the action. Why am I doing this? What happens inside me when nobody notices? How do I respond when another person receives the recognition I wanted? What happens when God does not answer the prayer I prayed? Do I still obey when obedience brings no immediate reward? These questions do not condemn good works. They help reveal whether good works are flowing from relationship with God or being used to construct a sense of worth apart from Him.

Jesus' teaching about the Pharisee and the tax collector is especially searching because the Pharisee was not presenting obvious wickedness. He was presenting religious achievement. The problem was that he had turned what should have been a response to God into evidence for his own superiority. Repentance therefore reaches deeper than changing visible behaviour. It brings the source of confidence itself under the rule of God.

This also explains why repentance is not merely a doorway we pass through once. As believers grow, God continues to reveal places where self has quietly taken control. We may repent of obvious sin and later discover that pride has entered our service, control has entered our planning, or self-protection has entered our relationships. Repentance keeps the heart open to God's correction. It is not a life of repeatedly trying to earn acceptance; it is a life

of continually returning to the truth that Christ is our righteousness and our source.

## **What Are Dead Works?**

Hebrews 6:1 begins with “repentance from dead works.” The word repentance naturally brings sin to mind, and repentance certainly includes turning away from sin. But the phrase “dead works” asks us to look more carefully at what God is addressing.

A dead work is not necessarily an obviously evil action. Scripture shows that a person can do something that looks right while the life behind it is not flowing from God. The issue is therefore not only what the hands are doing. It is what the heart is trusting.

Jesus confronted this problem in people who were highly religious. The Pharisees were not known for abandoning religious practice. They prayed, fasted, gave, and carefully observed religious duties. Their problem was that these things had become a ground for confidence in themselves. Their outward righteousness had become a way of measuring themselves before God.

In Luke 18:9-14, Jesus tells of a Pharisee and a tax collector who went to the temple to pray. The Pharisee's prayer centred on his own record. He thanked God that he was not like other people and listed the things he did. The tax collector had nothing impressive to present. He stood at a distance, would not lift his eyes toward heaven, and asked God for mercy.

Jesus said that the tax collector went home justified rather than the Pharisee. The lesson was not that fasting, giving, or moral discipline were bad. The problem was the source of confidence. One man came before God conscious of what he could present; the other came conscious of his need for mercy.

That distinction helps us understand dead works. A work may have a good appearance and still be rooted in self. The same outward action can come from very different places. A person can give because he loves God, or because he wants recognition. He can serve because Christ has given him a heart for people, or because he needs to feel important. He can obey because he trusts God, or because he is trying to build a record that will make him feel worthy. God is therefore concerned with more than the visible result. He is concerned with the source of the life that produces it.

## **Repentance and the End of Self-Confidence**

This is where repentance from dead works becomes deeper than simply changing a list of behaviours. Sin must be confronted, but the gospel also confronts the independence beneath sin—the assumption that life can be directed, justified, and sustained apart from God.

A person can leave obvious sinful habits and still remain deeply self-dependent. He may become disciplined, respectable, religious, and active in Christian service while continuing to believe that his own ability is sufficient. The outward life may improve while the inward source remains unchanged.

Paul describes the righteousness that comes through Christ in a way that removes boasting. In Philippians 3, he lists the credentials he once possessed and the confidence he could have placed in his religious background. Yet he came to regard those things as loss compared with knowing Christ. He no longer wanted a righteousness that he could call his own through law; he wanted the righteousness that comes through faith in Christ (Philippians 3:7–9).

This is the direction of repentance. We stop making ourselves the measure and source of our acceptance before God. We stop trying to establish a righteousness that can

be credited to our own strength. We come to God through Christ.

That does not produce carelessness. It produces a different kind of obedience. The believer still works, disciplines himself, serves, gives, prays, studies Scripture, and pursues holiness. But these things are no longer attempts to manufacture a standing before God. They become responses to the grace already received in Christ.

The difference is easy to miss because the outward activity may look similar. Two people can pray for an hour; one may be trusting God while the other is trying to prove something to himself. Two people can serve in church; one may be serving from love while the other is building an identity around being needed. The work can look the same while the source is different.

## **A Better Foundation for Obedience**

The gospel does not call us to become passive. It calls us to stop treating ourselves as the source of spiritual life. Jesus said, “Without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). The statement is not an invitation to inactivity. It is a revelation of dependence.

Christian life is not produced by adding religious effort to an otherwise independent life. It is produced by depending on a life we did not originate and cannot sustain by ourselves. Obedience, then, is not the price of acceptance; it is what dependence looks like in practice.

This changes the way we understand spiritual growth. Maturity does not mean that we eventually reach a point where we no longer need God. In fact, the more mature a believer becomes, the more clearly he understands his dependence upon Christ. Maturity brings greater responsibility without producing independence from God.

This also protects us from two opposite errors. One error is self-reliance: “I can do this by my strength.” The other is

passivity: "If God is doing everything, I have nothing to do." Scripture teaches neither. We work because God is at work in us. Paul could say, "I labored more abundantly than they all," and immediately acknowledge, "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me" (1 Corinthians 15:10). Grace does not remove responsibility. It changes the source from which responsibility is carried out.

## **The Heart Must Learn Dependence**

This dependence is tested not only when life is difficult. It can also be tested when life is going well. Deuteronomy warned Israel that when they entered a good land, multiplied in possessions, and experienced abundance, they could forget the Lord and say in their heart, "My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth" (Deuteronomy 8:10-18).

Abundance can therefore become a spiritual test. Poverty may make a person's need obvious, but prosperity can create the illusion that no need exists. A person may possess enough resources, connections, knowledge, influence, or experience to begin living as though dependence upon God is no longer necessary.

The issue is not possession itself. Scripture does not teach that having resources is automatically wrong. The danger is allowing what God has given us to become the place where we put our confidence. We can possess things without being possessed by them, but the heart must remain aware of its true source.

Repentance from dead works therefore reaches into the centre of our confidence. It teaches us to stop building our relationship with God upon what we can produce, possess, or control. Whether we have little or much, we remain dependent upon Him.

## **Repentance Opens the Way to Faith**

Hebrews places repentance from dead works before faith toward God. The two belong together. Repentance turns us away from the false source; faith turns us toward the true one. If I believe that I am sufficient in myself, there is little room for genuine dependence upon God. But when I recognise that I cannot establish my own righteousness, sustain my own spiritual life, or fulfil God's purpose by myself, I am ready to trust the One who can.

Faith is where this dependence finds its proper object. It is not created by repentance, but repentance clears the ground for it to take root. The next chapter takes up this foundation directly.

The first foundation does not leave us empty. It removes a false confidence so that a better confidence can take its place. We turn from dead works so that we can learn to live by faith toward God.

## **Chapter 2**

# **Faith Toward God**

### **Faith Learns the Character of the God It Trusts**

Faith becomes stronger as our understanding of God's character becomes clearer. We do not trust God in a vacuum. Scripture shows us who He is, what He has done, how He has dealt with His people, and what He has promised. As those truths become established, faith becomes less dependent upon the emotional strength of a particular moment.

This matters because feelings can change quickly. There are days when prayer feels easy and days when the heart is tired. There are seasons when circumstances seem to confirm everything we believe and seasons when they appear to contradict it. Faith gives us something firmer than the changing atmosphere of our inner life. It brings us back to what God has revealed about Himself.

A believer may still wrestle. Scripture contains honest prayers, questions, tears, and seasons of waiting. Faith does not require us to hide those experiences. It teaches us where to take them. We bring our questions to God rather than using them as a reason to walk away from Him. We bring our disappointment to Him rather than allowing disappointment to become our definition of who He is. In this way, faith becomes a relationship of trust that can carry both joy and uncertainty.

### **When Trust Means Surrendering the Outcome**

One of the hardest forms of faith is faith that leaves room for God to be God. We can sincerely believe that God is able to act and still struggle to trust Him when His wisdom does not follow our preferred timetable. The difference

becomes visible when prayer moves from demanding a particular result to confidently placing the matter in God's hands.

This does not weaken prayer. Scripture invites bold asking. Jesus taught His disciples to ask, seek, and knock, and the apostles repeatedly prayed with confidence. But biblical confidence is not an attempt to control God through faith. Faith rests in God's character while bringing real desires before Him. We can ask for healing while acknowledging His wisdom. We can pray for a door to open while remaining willing to follow Him if it closes. We can ask for provision without making material increase the evidence that God loves us.

The three Hebrew men who stood before Nebuchadnezzar illustrate this kind of trust. They believed God could deliver them from the furnace, yet they refused to make deliverance the condition of their loyalty. Their confidence was in God, not merely in a particular outcome. That is a deeper form of faith because it leaves God's wisdom intact even when circumstances remain painful.

Faith grows as our knowledge of God becomes deeper than our knowledge of what we want Him to do. We learn to recognise His faithfulness not only in answered prayers but also in seasons of waiting, correction, limitation, and uncertainty. We may not understand every circumstance, but we do not have to create our own certainty. We can remain with God while we wait for what we cannot yet see.

Repentance turns us away from a false source, but turning away is not the end of the Christian life. If we are no longer to depend upon ourselves, we must learn where our confidence should rest. Hebrews places "faith toward God" immediately after repentance from dead works.

Faith is the positive direction of the heart that has turned from self. It is not merely believing that God exists.

It is learning to trust Him as God, to receive His Word as true, and to order our lives around what He has said.

Hebrews 11:6 makes the matter clear: "Without faith it is impossible to please Him." The verse goes on to say that the one who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. Faith begins with God Himself. It does not begin with what we want Him to give us.

## **Faith Begins With God**

We often think about faith in terms of what we hope will happen. We believe for healing, provision, direction, open doors, protection, or a particular outcome. These concerns are not irrelevant to God. Scripture gives us many promises concerning His care for His people. But biblical faith is larger than confidence that God will give us a desired result.

Faith first answers the question, "Who is God to me?" Before faith is confidence in an outcome, it is confidence in a Person. Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness (Genesis 15:6). His faith rested on God's character and promise before he could see the fulfilment of what had been promised.

This matters because circumstances change. A person who has built faith only around a particular outcome may struggle when the outcome is delayed or different from what he expected. But when faith is rooted in God Himself, the believer can remain anchored even when he does not understand what God is doing.

Faith does not require us to pretend that difficulty is easy. It enables us to trust God in the middle of difficulty. It allows us to say, in effect, "I do not see everything, but I know the One in whom I have placed my confidence."

## **Faith Comes by Hearing**

Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Faith is not something we manufacture by becoming emotionally excited. It grows as we hear and receive what God has spoken.

This is one reason Scripture is central to a life of faith. We cannot build genuine confidence in a God we have invented in our imagination. We learn to trust God as He has revealed Himself. His Word corrects our assumptions, establishes His promises, exposes our fears, and gives us a true basis for confidence.

Faith may begin with a promise we have heard, but it must develop into a way of seeing. The more we know God through His Word, the more our response to circumstances can be governed by what He has said rather than by what circumstances appear to say.

The Israelites saw the same wilderness, the same obstacles, and the same giants, yet they did not all interpret them in the same way. Caleb and Joshua saw the difficulties, but they also saw the faithfulness and power of God. Their confidence was not based on pretending the giants were small. It was based on knowing that God was greater (Numbers 13-14).

## **From Trusting His Hand to Trusting His Heart**

There is a difference between trusting God because we expect Him to give us what we want and trusting Him because we know who He is. The first can be an early expression of faith, but God desires to bring us into deeper confidence in His character.

A child may trust a parent because the parent provides what the child needs. As the child grows, that trust can become deeper. The child begins to understand the

parent's character, wisdom, and love. The relationship is no longer defined only by what the parent gives.

Faith also grows in this direction. We learn to recognise God's hand, but we must also learn His heart. We trust Him when He provides, and we trust Him when His answer requires waiting. We trust Him when a door opens, and we trust Him when a door closes. We trust Him when we understand, and we continue to trust Him when we do not.

This kind of faith is not passive resignation. It is confidence that God's wisdom is greater than ours. Proverbs 3:5-6 tells us to trust in the Lord with all our heart and not lean on our own understanding. Faith does not reject understanding; it refuses to make human understanding the final authority.

## **Faith Changes How We Live**

If faith is real, it eventually affects decisions. James warns against a faith that remains only in words. Scripture consistently connects belief with response. Noah believed God's warning and built the ark. Abraham believed God's promise and went out. Moses believed God's purpose and chose to identify with God's people rather than remain in the privileges of Egypt (Hebrews 11).

Faith therefore gives obedience a different foundation. We do not obey merely because we are afraid of consequences. We obey because we trust the One who speaks. When God says forgive, faith believes His wisdom is better than our desire for revenge. When He calls us to give, faith trusts that generosity is not loss in His hands. When He calls us to wait, faith believes that His timing is not a mistake. Faith cannot remain a private opinion. It becomes visible in the way we live. The choices we make reveal what we actually trust.

## **Faith in Times of Abundance**

Faith is often associated with trusting God when there is nothing else to hold on to. Yet abundance can present another kind of test. When resources increase, dependence can quietly decrease. Deuteronomy 8 warns Israel about this danger. After they had eaten, become full, and prospered in the land God gave them, they could begin to say, "My power and the might of my hand have gained me this wealth." The danger was not simply having wealth. It was forgetting the God who had given them the ability to prosper.

The same principle can appear in Christian life. A person may begin by praying about everything because he knows he needs God. Later, as knowledge, money, influence, experience, or connections increase, he may begin solving problems without bringing them before God. What once drove him to dependence can be replaced by what he now possesses.

Faith keeps the heart oriented toward God whether there is little or much. A believer can use resources responsibly without placing his confidence in them. The issue is not whether we have something in our hands. It is whether our hearts have moved their confidence from God to what is in our hands.

## **Faith Must Grow**

Faith is not meant to remain at its earliest expression. A new believer may first come to God because of a need, and God may graciously meet that need. But as the believer grows, God becomes more than the One who solves problems. He becomes the One in whom the believer finds life.

This is one expression of spiritual maturity. The mature believer does not need fewer reasons to trust God. He has deeper reasons. He has learned God's faithfulness through

Scripture and experience. He has discovered that God's character remains steady even when circumstances are not.

Paul could say that he had learned how to be content both in times of abundance and in times of need because his strength was in Christ (Philippians 4:11-13). His stability did not depend upon the condition of his circumstances. His confidence had found a deeper foundation. Faith moves us from asking only, "What can God do for me?" to knowing, "God Himself is enough for me." His gifts matter, but they are not greater than the Giver.

## **Faith and Dependence**

The first foundation taught us that self-reliance must be confronted. The second teaches us what takes its place. Faith is dependence expressed through trust. Believers do not stop thinking, planning, learning, or taking responsibility. Faith does not excuse laziness or poor judgement. It means that while we use every ability God has given us, we do not make our abilities our ultimate confidence.

Paul describes this balance when he says, "We are God's fellow workers" (1 Corinthians 3:9). There is work for us to do, yet God remains the source and owner of the work. We act, but we depend. We plan, but we submit. We labour, but we acknowledge that our sufficiency comes from God.

This is the kind of dependence that prepares a believer for the next foundation. Faith does not merely teach us to believe something about Christ. It brings us into a life that is identified with Him. The next question, then, is not only "Do I believe in God?" but, "What does it mean to live as one who belongs to Christ?"

### **Chapter 3**

# **Baptisms: Identification with Christ and Life in the Spirit**

## **Union With Christ Gives Obedience a New Ground**

Identification with Christ also changes the reason for obedience. If Christianity were simply a system of commands, the believer's task would be to manage behaviour from the outside. But the New Testament describes a person who has died and risen with Christ and now belongs to Him. Obedience is therefore not merely an attempt to imitate Jesus from a distance. It is the response of someone whose life has been joined to Christ.

This does not make obedience automatic. Paul still instructs believers to put off the old ways and put on the new. There is a real response required from the believer. But the response is grounded in a new reality. We are learning to live consistently with who we are in Christ rather than trying to manufacture a new identity through effort.

This distinction becomes important when obedience is costly. Forgiveness may require us to surrender a right to remain offended. Integrity may require us to accept a financial or professional disadvantage. Love may require patience when another person is difficult. In such moments, natural strength may reach its limit. The life of the Spirit teaches us to draw from Christ rather than returning to the old habit of depending entirely upon ourselves.

The more this becomes established, the more Christian conduct becomes an expression of belonging. We are not

simply asking what will make us look like good Christians. We are learning what is consistent with the life of Christ that we have received.

## **The Spirit's Work Must Reach the Character**

The presence of the Holy Spirit in a believer's life should eventually affect more than moments of spiritual experience. Scripture places the Spirit's work alongside the formation of character. The fruit described in Galatians 5 is especially important because it concerns qualities that become visible in relationships and ordinary decisions. Love, patience, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control are tested precisely where life is inconvenient.

A person may know how to speak about spiritual things and still need the Spirit's work in the way he responds to an insult, handles money, treats a weaker person, receives correction, or uses authority. These ordinary situations often reveal whether our identity in Christ has become more than a statement we believe. The Spirit is not given merely to make us feel spiritual. He leads us into a life increasingly shaped by Christ.

This is also why walking in the Spirit cannot be separated from obedience. We do not sit passively waiting for spiritual feelings before doing what Scripture commands. We listen to God's Word, submit our desires to Him, practise what He teaches, and depend upon His strength. The Spirit's work and the believer's response belong together. Dependence is not inactivity; it is obedience carried out from the right source.

As this becomes established, identity begins to govern behaviour from within. We do not ask only what we are permitted to do. We begin to ask what is fitting for someone who belongs to Christ. That question reaches into speech, relationships, work, sexuality, money, ambition, forgiveness, and the use of influence. The new life becomes

visible because the new centre is increasingly governing the whole person.

Faith toward God does not leave a believer standing outside the life of Christ. Faith brings us into a relationship in which Christ becomes the centre of our new life. This explains why the doctrine of baptisms follows faith in the sequence of Hebrews 6:1-2. The subject is not merely a religious ceremony. Baptism points to realities that have taken place in and around the believer's relationship with God.

### **Baptisms as a Biblical Pattern of Identification**

The word "baptisms" is plural, and Scripture uses baptism in more than one setting. The Old Testament gives us a picture in Israel's experience: Paul says that the Israelites "were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea" (1 Corinthians 10:1-2). They passed through an experience that identified them with Moses and with the people he was leading. In the New Testament, baptism into Christ gives us an even greater picture of identification.

The word "baptisms" is plural, but Hebrews 6:2 does not explain in detail which specific practices or passages the writer has in view. The wider Scriptures speak about baptism in several settings, including Israel's identification with Moses, baptism into Christ's death and resurrection, and baptism in relation to the Holy Spirit. These passages help us consider the broader biblical meaning of baptism without assuming that Hebrews 6:2 is referring to every one of them. The emphasis is not on collecting religious experiences, but on understanding what it means to belong to Christ and to live from the life He gives.

These examples should not be confused with one another, because Scripture is not using the word baptism in exactly the same way in every passage. The baptism into Moses describes Israel's identification with the leader God had appointed and with the covenant community that

followed him. Baptism into Christ speaks of a deep identification: the believer is united with Christ in His death and resurrection. The New Testament also speaks of the Holy Spirit being given to God's people, coming upon them, dwelling in them, and bringing them into the life of the Spirit. These realities are related, but the passages should be allowed to speak in their own contexts. The common thread is that God is not merely giving His people religious activities. He is bringing them into realities that change their relationship to Him.

This helps protect us from reducing Christian baptism to an event that can be remembered without understanding what it signifies. The outward act has meaning because it points to a new relationship and a new way of life. To be identified with Christ is to have a new reference point for the whole person. We no longer interpret our lives only through our family background, achievements, failures, culture, desires, or previous decisions. Those things may remain part of our story, but they no longer have the final authority to define us. Christ does.

The same principle helps us understand why the work of the Spirit cannot be separated from identification with Christ. The Spirit does not simply give power for unusual moments; He forms the life of Christ in ordinary obedience. The believer learns to forgive, speak truthfully, resist temptation, love difficult people, exercise self-control, and serve without demanding recognition. These are not separate from spiritual life. They are among the places where the reality of belonging to Christ becomes visible.

## **Living From a New Identity**

Identification with Christ also changes the believer's understanding of freedom. The gospel does not describe freedom as the ability to follow every desire without restraint. Paul moves from union with Christ into a new relationship with sin and righteousness. The person who

has been united with Christ is no longer required to obey every desire that rises within him. He can say no to what once controlled him because he now belongs to Another. Christian freedom is therefore not freedom from God's rule; it is freedom to live under the rule of the One who gives life.

This matters in ordinary decisions because identity is often tested where no dramatic spiritual experience is taking place. A believer may know that he belongs to Christ and then face a conversation in which anger would be easier than patience, a business decision in which dishonesty would be profitable, or a relationship in which forgiveness feels undeserved. In such moments, identification with Christ gives more than a command to behave differently. It gives a new reason for obedience. We are learning to act consistently with the life we have received.

The Spirit's work also keeps this truth from becoming merely theoretical. Romans 8 speaks of the Spirit who dwells in believers and leads them as sons of God. The Spirit bears witness to our relationship with God, but He also leads us in that relationship. His presence brings the believer into an ongoing dependence that reaches beyond church meetings or moments of prayer. The Christian learns to listen to God's Word, respond to conviction, yield desires to Him, and make choices that agree with the character of Christ.

There is therefore a difference between knowing that Christ has become our life and actually learning to live from that reality. The first is a truth to believe; the second is a pattern that must be formed. This is why spiritual growth involves repeated surrender. The believer discovers that an old way of thinking does not disappear simply because he has received a new identity. He must allow the truth of who he is in Christ to reshape how he thinks,

chooses, relates, and responds. The Spirit works patiently in this process.

The result is not a believer who never struggles, but a believer whose struggle is taking place from a different foundation. Instead of fighting to prove that he can become acceptable to God, he learns to obey because he has already been brought near in Christ. Instead of depending on natural strength to produce spiritual character, he learns to yield to the Spirit. Instead of constructing an identity from success or failure, he receives his identity from Christ. This is the practical depth of the doctrine of baptisms: God has not merely given us religious knowledge; He has brought us into a new life from which we are meant to live.

## **Identified With Christ**

Romans 6:3-4 says that those who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death and raised to walk in newness of life. The language is significant. Baptism is presented as identification. The believer is no longer defining life only by the old identity. Christ's death, burial, and resurrection become the framework through which the believer understands his new life.

Christian conversion cannot be reduced to adding Jesus to an existing way of life. The gospel announces something deeper: we have come into Christ. The old life is no longer the final definition of who we are, and Christ is not merely an assistant to our former identity.

Paul expresses the same reality in Galatians 2:20: "I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me." He was still Paul. He still had responsibilities, decisions, work, relationships, and a personality. Yet the centre had changed. His life was now lived by faith in the Son of God who loved him and gave Himself for him.

That is the direction of the Christian life. Repentance turns us away from self-reliance. Faith turns us toward God. Identification with Christ teaches us that the life we are now learning to live is not an improved version of the old self. It is life under a new centre.

## **The Old Life and the New**

Romans 6 does not teach that believers never struggle again. It teaches that sin no longer has the same claim over the believer as it once did. The person who has been joined to Christ has entered a new relationship with sin, righteousness, and God.

This distinction matters because many Christians approach transformation as though the whole burden rests upon personal determination. They think, "I used to live this way; now I must become strong enough to live differently." Scripture gives a deeper answer. The believer must certainly put off what belongs to the old life and put on what belongs to the new, but this transformation is rooted in union with Christ.

The Christian does not overcome simply by becoming a stronger version of himself. He learns to live from the life he has received in Christ. Jesus could therefore say, "Abide in Me, and I in you" (John 15:4). The branch bears fruit because it remains connected to the vine.

Abiding is not a mystical idea detached from ordinary life. It means that Christ remains the source of our confidence, obedience, decisions, strength, and fruitfulness. We do not occasionally visit Christ for help and then return to independent living. We learn to remain in Him.

## **Baptism and the Life of the Spirit**

The New Testament also speaks about baptism in relation to the Holy Spirit. John the Baptist announced that Jesus

would baptize His people with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11). Acts records the coming of the Spirit upon the disciples at Pentecost, and Paul teaches that believers are brought into one body by one Spirit (1 Corinthians 12:13).

These passages point us beyond water as a physical element to the work of God Himself. The Christian life is spiritual life. The believer is not expected to reproduce the character and power of Christ through natural strength alone. The Holy Spirit is given to make God's life active within His people.

Paul tells the Galatians to walk in the Spirit rather than fulfil the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:16). He then describes the fruit produced by the Spirit: love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. These are not simply qualities a Christian admires. They are evidence of a life increasingly yielded to the Spirit of God.

This gives us an important connection with the first two foundations. Repentance rejects self as the source. Faith trusts God rather than self. Life in the Spirit teaches us, in practice, how to continue from that dependence. The believer is learning not merely to believe that God is the source, but to live from Him.

## **Learning to Live From Within**

There is a difference between controlling behaviour from the outside and being transformed from within. Rules can tell a person what not to do, but the Spirit works at the level of desire, character, and direction. He does not merely give information; He works in the believer to produce a life that reflects Christ.

This does not remove the need for discipline. The Spirit does not make Scripture, prayer, obedience, fellowship, or wise choices unnecessary. Instead, He changes what these practices are meant to accomplish. They are not techniques

for manufacturing spiritual life. They become ways through which we respond to and cooperate with the life God is producing in us.

A person learning to walk in the Spirit may still recognise weaknesses that need to change. Growth is often gradual. But the direction is different. Rather than asking only, "How can I force myself to behave better?" the believer learns to ask, "How is Christ teaching me to live here? What is the Spirit producing in me? What does obedience to God look like in this situation?" This is part of what it means to grow into maturity. Maturity does not mean becoming independent of God. It means becoming increasingly responsive to Him.

## **Identification Produces a New Way of Seeing**

When identity changes, the meaning of many things changes with it. A person who understands that he belongs to Christ begins to see temptation differently. Sin is no longer simply an unavoidable part of who he is. It is something inconsistent with the life into which he has been brought.

He also begins to see success differently. His worth does not depend on being admired, because his identity is not being constructed by public approval. He can serve without needing to be noticed. He can receive correction without treating it as a threat to his identity. He can succeed without believing that success has made him self-sufficient.

He can also face failure differently. Failure may require repentance, correction, and consequences, but it does not have to become the final definition of his life. His identity rests in Christ. This is one of the practical effects of identification with Christ. We are no longer required to build our identity from everything that happens around us. We belong to Another.

## **A Life That Can Be Recognised**

The reality of identification with Christ should eventually become visible. Paul tells believers to “walk worthy of the calling with which you were called” (Ephesians 4:1). The calling is inwardly received but outwardly expressed. This is where doctrine becomes life. If I am identified with Christ, His character should increasingly shape the way I treat people. If I am living by the Spirit, the fruit of the Spirit should become increasingly recognisable. If I belong to Christ, my choices should increasingly reflect His Lordship.

Christian maturity is not instant, and believers still stumble. The direction of life, however, has changed. The believer is no longer content to remain governed by the old patterns. He is learning to live from a new identity and a new source.

The doctrine of baptisms takes us further than an event we remember. It points to a life of identification, union, and dependence. We have been brought into Christ, and we are learning to live from the life of the Spirit He has given us.

Once a believer understands that he belongs to Christ, another question naturally follows: what does it mean to participate in what Christ is doing? The Christian life is not only about receiving from God. It also involves being entrusted with responsibility. This leads to the fourth foundation: laying on of hands.

## **Chapter 4**

# **Laying on of Hands: Participation and Responsibility**

### **Authority Is for Service**

Recognition should never become the measure of Christian service. It may come, and it may sometimes be appropriate for the church to acknowledge faithful service, but the servant's heart must remain free from dependence upon applause. If people see the work, we serve. If they do not see it, we still serve. If another person receives credit, we can continue faithfully because our assignment was never meant to become a monument to ourselves.

The pattern is especially important in a generation where spiritual influence can easily be confused with personal importance. A title, audience, or visible platform can make a person appear significant, but none of these things proves that he is carrying responsibility well. Scripture repeatedly brings leadership back to character and service. The person entrusted with others must learn to listen, exercise restraint, tell the truth, keep his word, and use whatever authority he has for the good of those under his care.

The biblical pattern of recognition and commissioning also teaches us what authority is for. Responsibility in the kingdom of God is given for service, not for personal importance. Jesus repeatedly connected greatness with serving others, and the early church entrusted people with responsibilities because those responsibilities were needed for the good of God's people.

This matters because authority can expose the heart. A person may begin with a sincere desire to help and later become attached to being the one who decides, speaks, or receives recognition. When that happens, responsibility has quietly become another route back to self. The foundation of laying on of hands calls us in the opposite direction: receive responsibility under God, carry it faithfully, and remember that the people we lead or serve belong to Christ.

Good stewardship includes knowing when to lead, when to support, when to listen, and when to make room for another person. A responsible servant does not need every assignment to prove his worth. He can rejoice when another person succeeds because the purpose is not personal prominence but the good of the body and the fulfilment of God's purpose.

## **Responsibility Within the Body**

Participation in God's work also means learning that we belong to one another. The New Testament does not present the church as a collection of independent believers who happen to meet in the same place. Paul describes one body with many members, each receiving a different function. That means Christian responsibility includes both what we do and how we relate to the people with whom God has joined us.

This has practical consequences. We must learn to receive correction without treating every correction as rejection. We must honour another person's gift without feeling diminished by it. We must carry responsibilities that may not produce public recognition. We must also be willing to step back when another person has been entrusted with a task that is not ours. These are not secondary lessons. They are part of learning to serve Christ without making ourselves the centre.

A healthy understanding of calling also protects believers from confusing opportunity with entitlement. God may open a door, but the existence of an opportunity does not mean we are entitled to every position we desire. Scripture repeatedly connects recognised responsibility with character, faithfulness, wisdom, and the ability to serve others. What matters is not simply whether we can do something, but whether we can carry it in a way that honours Christ and benefits His people.

This makes the ordinary places of life important. A parent caring for children, a worker acting with integrity, a believer keeping a promise, a friend carrying another person's burden, or a church member quietly helping where there is need is participating in a life of stewardship. God's work is not restricted to visible ministry. Much of faithfulness happens in places where there is no platform at all.

The Christian life begins with receiving what God has done, but it does not end there. Repentance turns us from self-reliance. Faith teaches us to depend upon God. Identification with Christ gives us a new place and a new source of life. From that place, we are called to participate in what God is doing.

This helps us understand why “laying on of hands” appears among the elementary principles in Hebrews 6:1–2. At first, the subject may seem less central than repentance, faith, or resurrection. Hebrews does not explain the practice in detail, so its meaning is best considered alongside the wider biblical witness. Throughout Scripture, laying on of hands appears in several settings, including identification, blessing, healing, recognition of spiritual ministry, and setting people apart for particular responsibility. These passages help us see how the physical act can point to participation in what God is doing without reducing its meaning to a single use.

## **A Biblical Pattern of Recognition and Sending**

In the Old Testament, Moses laid his hands upon Joshua before the congregation and gave him responsibility for leading Israel (Numbers 27:18-23; Deuteronomy 34:9). Joshua was not creating his own assignment. God had chosen him, and the community recognised what God was doing.

The same pattern appears in the early church. In Acts 6, the apostles directed the church to identify men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, to take responsibility for an important area of service. The church prayed and laid hands on them (Acts 6:1-6). Later, in Antioch, the church fasted and prayed before Barnabas and Saul were sent into the work to which the Holy Spirit had called them (Acts 13:1-3).

These accounts show that Christian ministry is not simply a matter of personal ambition. There is a difference between choosing a position and being entrusted with a responsibility. God's work is not built around people making themselves important. It is built around people recognising God's direction and faithfully responding to it.

The laying on of hands therefore carries an important lesson about how God works through the body of Christ. A person may receive a gift from God personally, but Christian responsibility is not designed to be lived in isolation. The church helps recognise what God is doing, creates room for service, offers correction, and shares responsibility for the work. This protects both the individual and the community. The person who serves is reminded that the work belongs to Christ, while the church is reminded that every member has a part to play.

This is also why recognition should never be confused with superiority. In the biblical pattern, being entrusted with a responsibility does not make one person more valuable than another. Different members have different

functions, but all remain members of one body. Paul uses the body in 1 Corinthians 12 to show that the eye cannot despise the hand or the head dismiss the feet. The fact that one person's assignment is more visible does not make that person more important to God. Christian maturity includes learning to honour the grace given to others without competing with it.

The same truth applies when responsibility is removed or transferred. A believer who understands stewardship does not build his identity around holding a particular position forever. There may be seasons in which a person leads, seasons in which he supports another leader, and seasons in which he serves quietly. What remains constant is faithfulness to Christ. This is another reason the laying on of hands is better understood as participation than promotion. The central issue is not what title a person carries but whether he is faithfully responding to what God has entrusted to him in the season he is in.

Seen this way, Christian service becomes broader than what is normally called ministry. A parent can exercise responsibility by raising children with patience and truth. A worker can honour Christ through integrity when nobody is watching. A believer can strengthen another Christian through encouragement, prayer, hospitality, generosity, or practical help. These activities may never receive public recognition, but they are still forms of participation in God's purposes. The question is not whether the work looks impressive. It is whether the person is faithfully using what God has placed in his hands for the good of others and the honour of Christ.

## **Participation Is Part of Maturity**

A new believer may initially think mainly about what God has done for him. He rejoices in forgiveness, salvation, provision, protection, and the many gifts of grace. As he

grows, his attention begins to widen. He starts asking what God wants to do through his life.

This is not a movement from grace to self-effort. It is the fruit of grace. God does not save us merely to make us recipients who remain spectators. He brings us into His family and gives us meaningful responsibility within His purpose.

This partnership does not place us on God's level. God remains the One who gives the growth, yet He chooses to involve His people in His work, giving gifts, opportunities, responsibilities, and relationships through which His purposes are carried forward.

Maturity includes participation. A believer who continually asks only, "What can I receive?" has not yet understood the whole direction of Christian life. The question eventually becomes, "What has God entrusted to me, and how should I faithfully use it?"

## **Gifts Are Given for Service**

The New Testament teaches that every believer has a place in the body of Christ. Paul says that the body has many members with different functions, and that each member belongs to the others (Romans 12:4-8). Peter similarly teaches that believers should use whatever gift they have received to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace (1 Peter 4:10).

A gift is a stewardship, not a badge of importance. What God gives is intended to become useful to others. This changes how we should think about ministry. We do not need to compete for visibility; we need to be faithful with what has been entrusted to us. Some responsibilities are public; others are almost invisible. Some people preach to many, while others faithfully care for a few. Some lead; others support. Some teach from a platform; others strengthen people through quiet encouragement, practical

service, prayer, generosity, or hospitality. The value of service is not determined by how many people see it. God is concerned with faithfulness.

## **Responsibility Requires Character**

Scripture does not separate spiritual responsibility from character. When the apostles sought people to serve in Acts 6, they looked for men whose lives already demonstrated good character and spiritual substance. Paul also gives character requirements for those who carry recognised leadership responsibilities (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9).

Ability and character are not the same thing. A person may be gifted and still be immature. He may speak well and lack wisdom. He may attract people and yet struggle with integrity. He may have influence without having developed the character required to carry that influence safely.

God's order is not to increase a person's platform for its own sake. He desires to form the person who will carry the responsibility. Spiritual maturity cannot be measured only by visible activity or supernatural gifting. Character, faithfulness, humility, and obedience are part of the foundation of useful service. What God entrusts to us should be carried in a way that honours the One who entrusted it.

## **Do Not Make Yourself the Centre**

There is a danger even in serving God: we can turn service into another form of self-centredness. The person who has repented from dead works must not quietly return to self through ministry. A believer may begin serving because he loves Christ, then gradually become concerned with recognition. He may compare his assignment with someone else's. He may become discouraged because his work is not

celebrated. He may measure his importance by position, title, audience, or influence.

The cure is not to stop serving. It is to remember whose work it is. Recognition may come, or it may not; either way, the work remains His, entrusted to us for a season and answerable to Him alone.

This brings the fourth foundation back into harmony with the first three. Repentance removes confidence in self. Faith places confidence in God. Identification with Christ gives us a new centre. Participation then becomes an expression of that new life rather than another attempt to build an identity for ourselves.

### **Faithfulness With What Is Entrusted**

Jesus repeatedly taught His disciples about stewardship. In the parable of the talents, the servants were judged according to what they did with what their master entrusted to them (Matthew 25:14-30). The point was not that every servant received the same amount. They did not. The point was that each servant was responsible for what had been placed in his hands.

This is a freeing truth. We do not have to reproduce someone else's assignment. We do not have to possess another person's gift, opportunity, influence, or resources. Our responsibility is to be faithful with what God has given us.

Comparison can distract us from stewardship. We may spend so much time looking at what another person is doing that we neglect what has been placed before us. Faithfulness begins when we receive our own responsibility from God and take it seriously.

This includes ordinary responsibilities. A person's family, work, relationships, finances, local church, opportunities to help others, and spiritual gifts can all become places of

faithful service. Participation in God's purpose is not restricted to a church platform.

## **Serving From Dependence**

The foundation of participation must remain dependence. We do not serve God because we have become sufficient in ourselves. We serve because He has called, equipped, and empowered us.

Philippians puts the same balance simply: we are to work out our salvation, "for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12-13). Effort is real, but it is effort drawn from a source we did not supply.

This protects us from both pride and discouragement. Pride says, "Look what I have accomplished." Discouragement says, "I am not enough, so there is no point trying." Dependence answers both by directing attention back to God. We are responsible to be faithful, but God remains our sufficiency.

The laying on of hands points to a life that receives responsibility without taking ownership of God's glory. We participate, but Christ remains the centre. We serve, but grace remains the source. We are entrusted with work, but the work belongs to God.

## **From Present Responsibility to Future Accountability**

Once responsibility is understood, another truth becomes unavoidable: what we do with what God entrusts to us matters beyond the present moment. Christian service is not simply activity that disappears when this life ends. Scripture connects faithful stewardship with the future evaluation of our lives.

This prepares us for the next foundation in Hebrews 6. The laying on of hands teaches us to participate faithfully in God's purpose. The resurrection of the dead reminds us that death is not the end of the story. What we do in this present life is lived in the light of a future that God has already promised.

The Christian does not serve merely for what can be seen now. He serves with the knowledge that Christ will raise the dead and bring His purposes to their appointed completion. Resurrection gives our present faithfulness a future horizon.

## **Chapter 5**

# **The Resurrection of the Dead**

### **Resurrection Reorders What We Call Loss**

Resurrection changes how we interpret loss. What disappears from our hands—money, opportunities, years, relationships, or unfinished work—does not have the power to give the final verdict on a life lived with God.

Paul's confidence that labour in the Lord is not in vain rests on resurrection itself. Some obedience produces visible fruit quickly; some is known only to God. Faithfulness therefore cannot be measured solely by results seen before death. God is able to carry His purposes beyond the limits of our present experience.

### **Resurrection and the Things We Cannot Finish**

There is a particular kind of discouragement that comes from knowing that we may not see the full result of our obedience. A parent may invest years in a child without seeing every fruit of that labour. A believer may pray for someone for years and never witness the answer he hoped for. A person may spend a lifetime serving others and die before the work appears complete. Resurrection gives these situations a larger context.

Christian faithfulness is not limited by the length of our earthly lives. God is not confined to the portion of His work that we can see. Paul could tell believers that their labour in the Lord is not in vain immediately after teaching them about resurrection. The connection is important: resurrection means the future belongs to God, so present obedience is never finally wasted even when its results remain hidden from us.

This also helps us face suffering without allowing suffering to become the final interpreter of our lives. Pain is real, injustice is real, and loss is real. Resurrection does not ask us to call them good. It tells us that they are not ultimate. The God who raised Jesus from the dead is able to bring His purposes through circumstances that appear incomplete, defeated, or beyond repair.

For that reason, resurrection hope produces patience without producing passivity. We continue to love, work, pray, correct what we can, reconcile where possible, and serve faithfully. We simply stop demanding that everything be completed within our preferred timetable. The resurrection assures us that God's story is larger than what we can finish in this present life.

The Christian faith does not end with this present life. One of the elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ is "the resurrection of the dead" (Hebrews 6:2). This truth gives the believer a horizon that reaches beyond the grave. Death is real, but for those who belong to Christ, it is not the final word.

The resurrection is far more than a comforting idea about life after death. It is a central part of the gospel. Paul says that if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is empty and our faith is also empty (1 Corinthians 15:14). Christianity stands upon a historical event: Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. Because He lives, the resurrection of His people is not wishful thinking. It is a promise grounded in what God has already done in Christ.

## **Christ Is the Foundation of Resurrection Hope**

The New Testament repeatedly connects our resurrection with the resurrection of Jesus. Paul calls Christ "the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20). Firstfruits point to what follows. Christ's resurrection is not an isolated miracle with no consequence for us. It is the beginning of the resurrection harvest.

Jesus Himself taught that a day is coming when those in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—some to the resurrection of life and others to the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:28–29). The future resurrection is not an optional part of Christian belief. It belongs to the expectation Jesus gave His followers.

This changes how we think about death. The Christian does not have to deny the pain of death, and Scripture does not ask us to pretend that separation from loved ones is easy. But grief is not the same as hopelessness. Paul told the Thessalonians not to sorrow like those who have no hope because the dead in Christ will rise (1 Thessalonians 4:13–18). Christian hope is not the denial of sorrow. It is sorrow held inside the certainty of God's promise.

## **What Will Be Raised?**

The resurrection therefore involves more than the survival of the soul. Scripture speaks about the raising of the dead. Christian hope is not that our present existence simply continues in another invisible form. God will act upon the whole person. The body that entered the grave will not remain there forever. What God raises will be transformed, fitted for the life of the coming age, and no longer subject to the corruption that marks the present body.

Paul uses several contrasts in 1 Corinthians 15 to explain this transformation. What is sown in corruption is raised in incorruption; what is sown in dishonour is raised in glory; what is sown in weakness is raised in power. These contrasts do not mean that God abandons the person who died and creates an unrelated person in his place. They show continuity together with transformation. The God who knows us completely is able to raise us into a condition suited to His eternal purpose.

This gives Christian hope a different quality from the hope people often place in memory or legacy. A person may continue to influence others through what he taught, built,

wrote, or left behind, but that is not resurrection. Resurrection is God's act of restoring life to the dead. It is therefore not something we achieve through the strength of our character or the quality of our legacy. It depends upon the power of God, just as the gospel itself depends upon what God has done in Christ.

Paul's language of firstfruits is especially helpful here. Firstfruits are not the entire harvest, but they are evidence of the harvest to come. Christ's resurrection means that the future resurrection is not an isolated promise floating in the distance. The future has already entered history in the person of Jesus. The One who was crucified has been raised, and because He has been raised, death has already suffered its decisive defeat. The believer waits for the completion of what has already begun in Christ.

## **Resurrection Hope in Present Suffering and Obedience**

This also explains why Christian grief can contain both sorrow and confidence. When a believer dies, those who remain still experience separation. Scripture does not require them to deny that pain. Jesus wept at the grave of Lazarus even though He knew He was about to raise him (John 11:35-44). The promise of resurrection does not make love less real or death less painful. It means that death cannot finally destroy what belongs to God. The Christian can grieve honestly without surrendering to despair.

Resurrection also answers a question that often lies beneath grief: what happens to the person whose earthly story seems unfinished? A life may end before children are raised, a calling appears complete, a relationship is restored, or a long prayer receives an answer. From the perspective of the grave, much can appear unresolved. But Scripture does not require us to believe that God's purposes are limited to what a person manages to

complete before death. Resurrection places the unfinished parts of our lives within the larger faithfulness of God.

Resurrection hope produces patience because we can obey God without demanding that every result become visible immediately. We can plant without seeing the harvest, teach without knowing who will carry the truth further, serve people whose lives may change long after our involvement has ended, and make sacrifices whose full value will never be measured by earthly recognition. God is not restricted to our timetable, and death cannot close the account of His purposes.

The resurrection therefore protects the believer from despair and impatience. We do not assume that what is lost can never be restored, nor do we try to force every promise into immediate fulfilment. We work faithfully in the present while trusting God with the future, doing what obedience requires today without demanding that today contain the whole result.

This perspective is especially important when obedience appears costly. Jesus Himself spoke of losing one's life for His sake and finding it. The apostles accepted suffering because they were looking beyond the present age. They did not regard suffering as valuable in itself. They believed that the God who raises the dead could be trusted with what obedience required them to surrender. Resurrection therefore gives courage to obey when immediate circumstances offer no visible reward.

## **The Nature of the Resurrected Body**

The doctrine of resurrection finally tells us something about the character of God. He is not a God who abandons His purposes when human strength reaches its limit. Death is the clearest boundary human beings cannot cross by their own power, yet it is not a boundary that limits God. The resurrection of Christ demonstrates His authority over death and gives believers confidence that the promises of

God do not depend upon human ability to preserve themselves. Our future rests in the faithfulness of the One who raises the dead.

Paul spends much of 1 Corinthians 15 answering questions about the resurrection body. He explains that what is sown is not identical in appearance to what is raised, yet there is continuity between the seed and the plant that comes from it. He describes the body that is buried as perishable and the body that is raised as imperishable (1 Corinthians 15:35–44).

The resurrection does not mean that God simply brings us back to the same condition in which we died. The resurrection body belongs to a different order of existence. What is subject to weakness, decay, and death will be raised in a form suited to the life God has promised.

Paul contrasts dishonour with glory, weakness with power, and a natural body with a spiritual body. He is not saying that the resurrected person becomes immaterial. He is describing a body fully fitted for the life of the age to come. The resurrection is God's answer to the problem of mortality.

## **The Defeat of Death**

Humanity has always lived under the shadow of death. Wealth cannot prevent it. Knowledge cannot finally defeat it. Medicine can extend life and relieve suffering, but death remains a reality that no human achievement has removed.

The resurrection declares that death itself will not have the final victory. Paul concludes his great resurrection teaching by saying, “Death is swallowed up in victory” (1 Corinthians 15:54). This victory is not achieved by human progress. It comes through Jesus Christ.

Because Christ has been raised, the believer can face death with a different expectation. Death may separate us from the people we love for a time, but it cannot separate

those who belong to Christ from God's final purpose for them. The grave is not the end of the believer's story.

## **Resurrection Gives Weight to the Present**

Resurrection also protects the believer from measuring God's faithfulness by speed. We live in a culture that expects immediate results, but Scripture presents faithfulness as a long obedience. The farmer waits for the harvest; the believer waits for the fulfilment of God's promise. Delay does not mean that God has forgotten what He said; it teaches us to live by faith instead of constant visible confirmation.

This matters especially when obedience appears to cost more than it returns. There are decisions whose value cannot be calculated in the present: choosing integrity when dishonesty would be profitable, remaining faithful to a difficult assignment, forgiving when there is no guarantee of reconciliation, or continuing to pray when the answer remains unseen. Resurrection gives these choices a future that immediate circumstances cannot provide. The believer does not need to make every sacrifice look successful today in order to know that faithfulness matters.

It may seem that a future resurrection has little to do with ordinary life now. Paul teaches the opposite. After spending an entire chapter explaining the resurrection, he concludes, "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

The word "therefore" matters. Because resurrection is certain, present faithfulness matters. Because death is not the end, what we do in this life is not meaningless. Paul says that our labour in the Lord is not in vain.

This gives Christian work a different value. A quiet act of obedience, an unseen sacrifice, a prayer offered when no one is watching, patience with a difficult person, generosity

without applause, or years spent faithfully serving others may appear small when measured only by immediate results. Resurrection tells us that God sees beyond what can be measured today and gives the present its proper meaning.

## **Living Between Promise and Fulfilment**

Much of Christian life is lived between what God has already done and what He has promised to complete. Christ has already risen, but our own resurrection is still future. We have received new life, but we are still waiting for the redemption of our bodies (Romans 8:23).

Faith is necessary. We learn to live faithfully even when the final result is not yet visible. Abraham lived by promise. Moses chose obedience because he looked toward God's reward. The saints described in Hebrews 11 endured because they were looking beyond what could be immediately seen.

The resurrection strengthens this way of living. We do not need every reward to arrive now. We do not need every injustice to be corrected immediately. We do not need every sacrifice to be recognised in the present age. God has a future in which His purposes will be completed and His people will share in the life He has promised.

## **The Unseen Is Not Unreal**

One reason believers become discouraged is that visible circumstances can appear more substantial than spiritual realities. What we can see, touch, measure, and experience immediately can seem more real than what God has promised.

Scripture teaches us to look differently. Paul says that "we do not look at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen" because the things which are

seen are temporary, while the things which are not seen are eternal (2 Corinthians 4:18).

The physical world is not meaningless, but it is not the whole of reality. There is an eternal dimension that cannot be measured by present circumstances.

The resurrection gives this unseen future a concrete centre. We are not simply hoping that something better exists somewhere. We are looking toward a promised resurrection, a transformed body, the return of Christ, and the completion of God's redemptive purpose.

## **The Hope of Seeing Christ**

The greatest hope of resurrection is not simply receiving a better body or living in a better world. It is being with Christ. Paul described death as departing to be with Christ, which he said was far better (Philippians 1:23).

The gospel brings us to a Person. The One who died for us is the One who was raised, and the One who will raise us. Resurrection hope is deeply relational. We are not merely waiting for an event; we are waiting for the fulfilment of our relationship with Christ.

This hope can steady a believer through seasons that cannot be understood by immediate circumstances. What is lost in this life is not the final measure of what God is doing. What is unfinished is not necessarily forgotten. What is hidden is not necessarily insignificant.

The resurrection tells us that God's purpose reaches beyond the limits of our present experience. Life does not end at the grave, and God's faithfulness does not end there either.

## **Resurrection Hope Produces Present Faithfulness**

A person who genuinely expects resurrection should live differently from someone who believes this life is all there is. Eternity changes the way we measure success, suffering, sacrifice, possessions, relationships, and time.

The resurrection does not tell us to neglect this world. It teaches us to live in this world without treating it as the final world. We work, love, build, serve, and care for people, but we do so with a longer horizon than immediate reward.

This also protects us from despair. There are things we cannot fix in the present life. There are prayers whose answers we may not see. There are sacrifices whose fruit may become visible only after we are gone. Resurrection means that the story is larger than the portion we can currently see. The believer can remain faithful without needing to control the outcome. God raises the dead. What He has promised, He is able to complete.

## **From Resurrection to Accountability**

The hope of resurrection is also connected to responsibility. The fact that our lives continue beyond death means that what we do now has eternal significance. Scripture does not present resurrection as an escape from accountability. It places present life within the larger purposes of God.

This prepares us for the final foundation in Hebrews 6: eternal judgment. Resurrection tells us that death is not the end. Eternal judgment tells us that our lives will ultimately be brought before God. Together they teach us to live neither carelessly nor fearfully, but with the seriousness that comes from knowing that eternity is real.

*Idowu O. Babalola*

The resurrection gives hope to the believer. Eternal judgment gives sobriety to the believer. Both are necessary if we are going to live faithfully in the present age.

## **Chapter 6**

# **Eternal Judgment**

### **Judgment and the Good News of Christ**

The doctrine of eternal judgment should also deepen our appreciation of what Christ has done. If accountability before God were not real, the seriousness of reconciliation would be diminished. But Scripture places judgment and salvation together. The God before whom every life is exposed has acted in Christ to reconcile sinners to Himself.

For the believer, confidence before God is not confidence in personal perfection; it is confidence in Christ. The Judgment Seat of Christ does not change the foundation of the gospel. It makes the grace of the gospel more precious because we understand that the One who evaluates our lives is also the One who gave Himself for us. Grace is not permission to waste our lives; it is the ground from which faithful living becomes possible.

For those who have not received Christ, the reality of final judgment gives the gospel urgency. That urgency must be expressed with love. We are not sent to frighten people into religious activity or to pronounce ourselves as their judge. We are called to tell the truth about God, sin, salvation, and eternity and to point people to Christ while the present opportunity remains.

This also changes the way we view people around us. If eternity is real, then people are more important than our arguments with them, our desire to win an argument, or our irritation with their failures. The seriousness of judgment should make our witness more compassionate. We want people to encounter the same grace that has given us hope.

## **What Judgment Reveals About Faithfulness**

The prospect of God's judgment also changes the way we understand success. Human beings naturally measure what can be counted: income, numbers, influence, titles, recognition, possessions, and visible results. These measurements can have legitimate uses, but they cannot tell the whole story of faithfulness. A life may be publicly impressive and spiritually shallow, while another life may appear ordinary and yet be rich in obedience, love, sacrifice, and integrity.

The hidden life matters. What a person does when there is nothing to gain from being seen can reveal what governs the heart. Jesus warned His disciples about practising righteousness in order to be noticed by people (Matthew 6:1). The issue was not whether the acts were righteous. It was whether human applause had become the reward being sought. Eternal judgment exposes that difference because God is not limited to outward appearance.

The same principle applies to resources. Possessions are not automatically evidence of spiritual failure, and lack of possessions is not automatically evidence of spiritual faithfulness. Scripture warns about the heart's relationship to wealth because abundance can create the illusion of independence. When what we have begins to replace dependence upon God, blessing can become a source of spiritual danger. Eternal perspective asks us to hold resources as stewardship rather than identity.

Judgment should therefore lead to honest repentance now, not fearful speculation about the future. The purpose of knowing that God sees is not to make us live under constant panic. It is to make us willing to live in the light. When we recognise pride, we can repent. When we discover wasted opportunity, we can become faithful. When we have wronged someone, we can seek reconciliation. The present life is still an opportunity to respond to God.

## **The Last Foundation**

The sixth elementary principle named in Hebrews 6:2 is “eternal judgment.” After speaking about resurrection, the writer brings us to the reality that every human life ultimately stands before God. Resurrection means death is not the end. Eternal judgment means our lives do not disappear into nothingness after death. God will judge with perfect righteousness.

This is not an idea introduced to frighten people into religion. It is part of the teaching of Christ and part of the hope of the gospel. Scripture presents God as the Judge of all the earth, and it assures us that His judgment will be right (Genesis 18:25; Romans 2:5-6). The same God who saves by grace is the God who judges with righteousness. His mercy does not make His justice unnecessary, and His justice does not make His mercy untrue.

## **Grace Does Not Remove Responsibility**

The message of salvation is that we are saved by grace through faith, not by earning acceptance with God through our works (Ephesians 2:8-9). Christ has done what we could never do for ourselves. Our confidence before God rests in Him, not in our performance.

But the next verse is equally important: “we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works” (Ephesians 2:10). Grace does not produce a life without responsibility. It produces a life that belongs to God.

This distinction matters. We do not work in order to purchase salvation, but neither does salvation make our works irrelevant. Scripture repeatedly teaches that believers will give an account of how they have lived. Jesus spoke about faithfulness, stewardship, obedience, and the condition of the heart. Paul told believers that each person would give an account of himself to God (Romans 14:10-12).

## **Christ Is the Foundation**

Paul gives an important picture of this responsibility in 1 Corinthians 3. He says that no one can lay any foundation other than Jesus Christ. The foundation is already established. The question is what we build upon it.

He then describes different kinds of building materials—gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, and straw. The day will reveal the quality of each person's work because it will be tested by fire (1 Corinthians 3:11-13).

The point is not that a believer earns salvation by building well. The foundation is Christ. The issue is the quality of what is built upon Him. A person may belong to Christ and yet discover that much of what he has built has no lasting value.

This should change the way we think about Christian service. It is possible to be busy and still be unfaithful. It is possible to receive recognition from people and yet have little of eternal value to show before God. What matters is not simply how much we do, but whether what we do is built upon Christ and done in faithfulness to Him.

## **The Judgment Seat of Christ**

Paul tells believers that “we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ” so that each may receive according to what he has done in the body, whether good or bad (2 Corinthians 5:10). This is a sobering statement, but it should be understood correctly.

For the believer, this judgment is not a second opportunity to earn salvation. Christ has already dealt with the guilt of sin through His death and resurrection. The Judgment Seat of Christ concerns the believer's life and work. It brings what has been done into the light of God's evaluation.

The Lord sees what people do not see. He knows motives, sacrifices, opportunities, faithfulness, and the things done when no one is watching. Human recognition can be very different from God's assessment. A person may appear successful because of a large platform, while another person may seem insignificant but have spent years quietly serving Christ and people with a sincere heart.

Jesus warned against doing righteous acts simply to be seen by others (Matthew 6:1). The desire for human applause can make even good activity spiritually empty. Eternal judgment calls us back to a better question: Who are we living for?

### **Not Everything We Build Will Remain**

The picture in 1 Corinthians 3 is especially helpful because Paul says that some work will endure the test while other work will be burned up. The person may suffer loss, even though he himself is saved (1 Corinthians 3:14-15).

This shows that salvation and the lasting value of our work are not the same thing. A believer can be genuinely saved and yet waste opportunities that God gave him. Grace gives us life, but our stewardship of that life still matters.

That should not produce anxious striving. It should produce careful living. We should ask God to purify our motives, teach us obedience, and help us use what He has entrusted to us well. The goal is not to impress God with activity. It is to faithfully respond to what He has given us.

### **Eternal Judgment Beyond the Believer's Accountability**

Scripture also speaks of a final judgment that includes those who have rejected God. Jesus taught that there will be a resurrection of life and a resurrection of

condemnation (John 5:28-29). Revelation 20 describes the great white throne, before which the dead are judged according to their works.

This judgment should not be confused with the Judgment Seat of Christ. The New Testament presents different scenes and contexts of judgment, and we should not collapse them into one event simply because both involve God judging human lives.

The distinction also protects the meaning of grace. Scripture does not present final judgment as though human beings could balance their good deeds against their sins and purchase acceptance with God. The gospel rests on Christ, while judgment reveals the truth about how people have responded to God and how they have lived. For those who belong to Christ, accountability does not become a second foundation for salvation; for those who reject Him, judgment confirms the seriousness of remaining outside the life God offers in Christ.

Revelation 20 presents the great white throne as a final judgment in which the dead stand before God, the books are opened, and each person is judged according to what is written in them. The passage then speaks of anyone not found written in the Book of Life being cast into the lake of fire (Revelation 20:11-15). In the context of the gospel, this judgment belongs to the final accountability of those who remain outside the salvation found in Christ.

The seriousness of this passage should not be softened. Scripture presents eternal judgment as a real and final reality. It is not presented as a temporary punishment that eventually disappears, nor as a symbolic way of saying that bad choices have consequences. Jesus repeatedly warned about final separation from God, and the apostles continued that warning.

## **Judgment, Urgency, and the Believer's Sobriety**

The finality of judgment also means that the decisions made in this life cannot be treated as though they have no lasting significance. Scripture consistently presents this life as the period in which people respond to God. The gospel therefore calls for a response now, not merely an agreement that judgment exists. To hear Christ and continually refuse Him is not a neutral position. It is a continuing response to the light God has given.

At the same time, the reality of eternal judgment should never be separated from the revelation of God's mercy in Christ. The warning makes sense because God has provided salvation. Scripture does not present human beings as helplessly moving toward judgment without any invitation to turn. The same gospel that warns of final separation announces forgiveness, reconciliation, new life, and peace with God through Jesus Christ. The seriousness of judgment therefore increases rather than weakens the value of grace.

This also gives the Christian message a different kind of urgency from religious pressure. We do not need to manipulate people by exaggerating fear. We can tell the truth plainly: God is righteous, judgment is real, and Christ is the appointed Saviour. The appropriate response is to turn to Him while the invitation of the gospel is open. Paul could reason about righteousness, self-control, and the judgment to come while speaking to people who needed to hear the truth. Christian witness should carry the same combination of seriousness and hope.

For the believer, the same reality creates a sober understanding of stewardship. Time is not simply something to spend until life ends. Relationships, gifts, and resources are not merely temporary possessions or tools for personal advancement. They are areas in which a person can respond faithfully to God. The coming judgment does not make ordinary life less spiritual; it reveals that

ordinary life is precisely where faithfulness is being formed.

This is why eternal judgment belongs among the elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ. A believer who understands judgment learns to live with a longer horizon than immediate comfort, recognition, or success. The question is no longer only whether something works, whether people approve of it, or whether it produces visible results. The deeper question is whether it is faithful before God. That question brings the whole Christian life back to the One who laid the foundation in the first place.

### **Judgment According to Works and the Hope of the Gospel**

The language of judgment according to works must also be understood within the larger witness of Scripture. God does not need works to discover information He does not possess. He already knows the heart. Works reveal what a person has done with the light, opportunities, abilities, and responsibilities entrusted to him. They make visible the direction of a life. This is why Scripture can speak about judgment according to works without teaching that human beings can earn salvation by accumulating enough good deeds.

The distinction is especially important because two opposite errors are possible. One error turns grace into a reason to ignore obedience, as though what we do no longer matters because Christ has saved us. The other turns judgment into a system of earning acceptance, as though careful performance can place God in our debt. The gospel rejects both. Salvation is received through Christ, while the life that follows salvation is still lived before God. Grace establishes our relationship with Him; it does not make our choices meaningless.

Scripture's teaching about final judgment also reminds us that God's patience should not be mistaken for

indifference. The fact that judgment has not yet occurred does not mean that God does not see evil or that justice will never come. Romans 2 connects God's kindness and patience with a call to repentance. His patience gives people opportunity to turn, but it does not cancel the reality of accountability. This is one reason the present moment matters so much. We are living in a period in which God's mercy calls people toward Him.

For the church, this should produce neither harshness nor silence. We should not speak about judgment as though we delight in the condemnation of others, because the gospel calls us to desire their salvation. Neither should we avoid the subject because it is uncomfortable. Jesus spoke about judgment because love tells the truth about what is at stake. The Christian message becomes distorted if it speaks only of comfort while removing the seriousness of rejecting God, but it is equally distorted if it speaks of judgment without the mercy and invitation of Christ.

There is also a pastoral value in remembering that God alone is the final Judge. We are responsible to discern, correct, encourage, and sometimes confront one another according to Scripture, but we are not given God's place. We do not know every motive, every circumstance, or every hidden struggle. This should make us serious about our own lives and careful about judging others. The certainty that God will judge righteously frees us from the need to establish our own final verdict over people.

The hope of the gospel is therefore not that judgment has been ignored, but that judgment has been answered in Christ for those who belong to Him. The believer does not stand before God pretending to have been flawless. He stands in the righteousness of Christ, while still giving an account of the life he has lived. This combination of security and accountability is difficult to hold together if we think only in terms of human performance, but it becomes clear when Christ remains at the centre. He is both the

ground of our acceptance and the Lord before whom we live.

## **God's Judgment Is Righteous**

The reality of judgment raises difficult questions, but Scripture gives us a firm foundation: God is righteous. Abraham asked, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" (Genesis 18:25). The answer is yes.

God does not judge with the limitations that affect human judgment. He sees the whole person, every circumstance, every motive, and every truth that we cannot see. His judgment is not careless, emotional, or corrupt.

Paul explains in Romans 2 that God will render to each one according to his deeds and that there is no partiality with Him. God's judgment is not something we should measure by our own limited understanding of fairness. We begin with who God is. The Judge is good, and His judgment will be consistent with His character.

## **Why Judgment Matters Now**

If judgment belongs to the future, why should it affect the way we live today? Because Scripture consistently uses future accountability to shape present faithfulness. Knowing that we will stand before Christ should make us more careful with our words, our relationships, our responsibilities, our opportunities, and our motives. It should also make us less controlled by the opinions of people. The approval of people lasts for a moment; God's evaluation reaches into eternity.

This is particularly important in a culture that often measures success by visibility. Numbers, possessions, titles, influence, and public recognition can all become measures of worth. None of them is wrong in itself, but none of them is the final measure. A life can look impressive and still be poorly built.

The same is true of prosperity. Material abundance can be a blessing, but it can also test the heart. Deuteronomy 8 warns Israel that when they become prosperous, they could forget the Lord and begin to say that their own power had produced their wealth. Jesus likewise warned against storing treasures on earth and taught that where our treasure is, our heart will be also (Matthew 6:19–21).

The issue is not simply whether we have much or little. The deeper question is whether what we have has become our confidence. Eternal judgment brings our stewardship back into view: what did we do with what God entrusted to us, and whom did we trust while doing it?

### **Living With Eternity in View**

Eternity also helps us resist the temptation to postpone obedience. Because the future is certain, today matters. We may tell ourselves that we will become more generous later, repair a relationship later, take holiness seriously later, or use our opportunities more faithfully when circumstances become easier. But life is lived in actual days, not in imagined future versions of ourselves. Eternal perspective does not pull us away from today's responsibilities; it makes today's responsibilities more serious.

At the same time, eternal perspective keeps responsibility from becoming despair. We will not live perfectly, and Scripture does not teach us to place our hope in the quality of our performance. We return again and again to Christ. We repent when we fail, receive His grace, make what correction we can, and continue walking. The Judge before whom we stand is not a stranger to us. For those who belong to Christ, He is also the Saviour in whom our confidence rests.

Eternal judgment should create sobriety without producing hopelessness. The gospel does not tell us to spend our lives trying to make ourselves acceptable to God.

It tells us to receive Christ, remain in Him, and live faithfully from the grace we have received.

Paul could speak seriously about appearing before Christ while also living with confidence in God's grace. These truths belong together. We are not saved because our lives are flawless, but neither should grace become an excuse for carelessness.

Living with eternity in view means learning to value what God values. Character matters. Faithfulness matters. Love matters. Obedience matters. The people we influence matter. The opportunities we receive matter. Even the ordinary responsibilities of life can become part of faithful service when they are lived before God.

This perspective also changes how we respond when our work is hidden. God sees what people do not see. He is not limited by public recognition, and His memory is not limited by human attention. What seems small in the present may have eternal significance.

There is a particular comfort in knowing that God sees the whole story when human beings see only part of it. We often evaluate our lives by results because results are what we can measure. We know whether a project succeeded, whether people responded, whether a prayer seemed answered, or whether an opportunity produced the outcome we expected. God sees beyond those measurements. He sees the faithfulness that produced the action, the motives behind it, the opportunities we were given, and the circumstances in which obedience was offered. His judgment therefore reaches places that human applause or criticism cannot reach.

That should make us less anxious about being seen and more concerned about being faithful. A person who lives before God does not need every good thing he does to become public evidence of his worth. He can accept that some work will remain hidden. He can also accept

correction when something he considered successful was not pleasing to God. Eternal judgment shifts the centre of evaluation away from the crowd and back to the Lord. The believer's aim is not to build an impressive reputation but to build a life that can stand honestly before Christ.

## **Conclusion**

# **Living on the Foundation**

Hebrews calls us to go on to maturity, but maturity does not mean leaving the foundations behind. It means allowing them to become established enough to govern the life we are actually living. The six principles are not subjects to be completed and forgotten. They are truths that continue to shape the believer as responsibility increases, circumstances change, and the future comes closer.

Repentance teaches us to recognise and abandon confidence in dead works. Faith teaches us to place that confidence in God. Identification with Christ tells us where our new life comes from, and the Spirit teaches us to live from that new source. Laying on of hands reminds us that grace also brings responsibility: what God entrusts to us is meant to become useful to others. Resurrection tells us that death cannot cancel God's purpose, and eternal judgment reminds us that the way we use this life matters before Him.

Seen together, these truths protect the Christian life from two opposite mistakes. We can become so focused on what we must do that we forget our dependence upon Christ, or we can speak so much about grace that we forget the responsibility that grace creates. Scripture gives us neither self-reliance nor passivity. We receive from Christ, live from Christ, and serve because of what we have received from Him.

The foundations also teach us how to live when circumstances are changing. Success does not have to become our identity. Failure does not have to become our final definition. Abundance does not have to replace dependence. Suffering does not have to become proof that

God has abandoned us. Hidden faithfulness does not become meaningless simply because people do not see it. The resurrection tells us that the present is not the whole story, while eternal judgment tells us that the present still matters.

What, then, should these truths produce? A life that keeps returning to Christ. A heart willing to repent when self takes the centre. Faith that trusts God beyond immediate outcomes. A willingness to walk by the Spirit rather than merely manage outward behaviour. Faithfulness with whatever God has entrusted. Hope that remains steady because Christ has been raised. And a sober awareness that our lives are lived before the God who sees what others cannot see.

We do not know everything that lies ahead. We do know enough to live faithfully today. Christ is the foundation already laid. Our task is not to create another foundation, but to build upon the one God has given us. As we do, these elementary principles become more than doctrines we can explain. They become the convictions from which we live.

If this concise edition has helped establish that foundation more clearly, let its purpose continue beyond the last page. Return to Scripture. Examine your life honestly. Trust Christ more deeply. Use what He has entrusted to you. Remain faithful when results are hidden. Keep the resurrection before you, and live with eternity in view. There is more to learn, but there is no other foundation than Jesus Christ.

The invitation to maturity is not an invitation to outgrow dependence upon Christ. It is an invitation to become so established in Him that dependence produces faithful action, that faith survives uncertainty, that service remains humble, and that eternity shapes the way we use the present. The foundation is not something we leave behind. It is where the whole life remains rooted.



# **Going Deeper**

This concise edition has introduced the six elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ as one connected foundation. Its purpose has been to make these truths clear enough to grasp and practical enough to begin living. The foundation, however, is not exhausted by a concise treatment. Each principle opens into a wider biblical landscape that deserves careful study.

The expanded edition of *The Foundations of Christ* develops these same truths at greater length. It gives more room to examine the Scriptures behind each principle, trace their implications, and consider how they work together in the life of a believer. The two editions therefore serve different purposes: this book is a shorter doorway into the foundations, while the expanded edition provides a fuller study for readers who want to remain with these truths longer.

Whether you continue with the expanded edition or return to these pages again, the goal is the same: to be established in Christ. Let repentance continue to turn your heart away from self-reliance. Let faith deepen your confidence in God. Let your union with Christ shape the way you live by the Spirit. Let what God entrusts to you become an opportunity for faithful service. Let the resurrection strengthen your hope, and let the reality of eternal judgment give weight to the way you live today.

The foundation is Christ. Everything else must be built upon Him.

## **About the Author**

Idowu O. Babalola is a bondservant and an Apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ with a deep passion for Bible teaching, revealing the realities of the Kingdom of God, and raising believers who faithfully reflect the image and likeness of Jesus Christ. As a Christian author, his ministry is devoted to teaching the Scriptures with clarity, depth, and practical application, leading people beyond mere religious profession into genuine spiritual transformation.

For over a decade, Apostle Babalola has been actively engaged in cross-cultural missions, proclaiming the gospel in diverse communities and ministering extensively across Nigeria, particularly in the Northern and Eastern regions. He has served faithfully alongside the United Missionary Church of Africa (UMCA), headquartered in Ilorin, Kwara State, as well as with other mission organizations, preaching Christ, strengthening believers, planting biblical foundations, and advancing the work of God's Kingdom.

His ministry is marked by a steadfast commitment to sound biblical doctrine, discipleship, and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Through the preaching and teaching of God's Word, the Lord has graciously drawn many into His Kingdom, confirming His truth through transformed lives, divine healing, deliverance, and the manifestation of His power.

Apostle Babalola has written a growing catalog of works devoted to the realities of the Kingdom of God, biblical discipleship, and spiritual formation, including *The Soul Under God*, *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, *When Prayer Becomes Communion*, *The Gates: A Journey Into Spiritual Maturity*, *Law, Sin, and Righteousness*, *Faith, Hope, and Love*, *Unveiling the Sons of God*, *The Foundations of Christ*, *The New Testament Secret*, *The Beast and the Lamb*, *The Mandate of Transformation*, *The Ultimate*

Father, Beyond Songs: The Worshipper God Seeks, and What Happened to Us? (The Search: Why Nothing Ever Seems Enough). Through these writings, he seeks to establish believers upon the unchanging truth of God's Word, deepen their knowledge of God, cultivate authentic worship, and reveal God's eternal purpose in Jesus Christ.

Apostle Babalola is joyfully married to Mrs. Babalola Adebisola Faith, and they are blessed with two children, Babalola Tijesu Joshua and Babalola Eden Titoluwa.

His earnest desire is to know Christ more deeply, make Him known among the nations, and see believers established in the truth of God's Word, growing into spiritual maturity and living for the glory of God alone.

## **Connect with the Author**

Thank you for reading *The Foundations of Christ*. It is my sincere prayer that these pages have helped you understand the elementary principles of the doctrine of Christ more clearly and have encouraged you to build your life more firmly upon Him.

I would love to hear how this book has affected your walk with Christ. Your testimonies, questions, and feedback are a blessing and an encouragement as I continue to serve the Body of Christ through teaching, writing, and ministry.

For speaking engagements, counselling, ministry invitations, or to connect with Apostle Babalola, you may reach me through the following channels:

|                                     |                     |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Email:                              | idbabs012@gmail.com |
| Facebook:                           | Idowu O. Babalola   |
| TikTok:                             | @pst.idowubabalola  |
| Speaking Engagements & Counselling: | +234 813 606 8225   |

May the Lord establish you in His truth, strengthen you to remain faithful to Christ, and cause these foundations to become increasingly evident in the way you live. To God alone be all the glory.