THE SIX FOUNDATION STONES

Part B

Now we've done the first four foundation doctrines. I don't even dare to look at my watch. This is where it becomes extremely important not to stop because at this point, going through the next two doctrines we pass out of time and into eternity. And Paul says in 1 Corinthians 15:19:

If in this life only we have hope in Christ we are of all men the most pitiable.

Now I believe there are a lot of pitiable Charismatic Christians because all they have hope for is in this life. And sooner or later they're going to be confronted with bitter disappointment. Most people today don't sing old hymns. Personally, I think there's a lot to be said for not letting them go. But if you study the hymns up till the first decade of this century almost every hymn had a verse about death, you'd hardly find one that didn't. It was built into their anticipation, they were aware of the fact they were going to have to die. And the truth of the matter is we're all going to have to die unless the Lord comes first. But the majority of Charismatics I observe today are not prepared to face death or bereavement.

We've got it all so nice we don't use any dirty words now. We don't talk about a funeral home, we talk about a chapel of rest. We don't talk about a cemetery, it's a garden of peace. The truth of the matter is it is a cemetery, it is a place where people are buried. And if your faith isn't equipped for that you are of all people the most pitiable.

I have been wondering about the church of Laodicea because Jesus said to them, "You're blind, miserable and naked, and you don't even know it!" I've been staggered by the thought of how you can be all those things and not know it. But you know what I've come to the conclusion? They didn't make provision for anything beyond this life. And so they were of all men the most miserable.

This is a very, very important issue. I have dealt with people—I have to be careful I don't give any indication of who they were—who were ministers in Charismatic movements who died suddenly and

their family were left totally destroyed. I remember one woman said to me, "I don't know what to tell my children." Well, that's a tremendous lack of preparation.

I have been bereaved; I lost my first wife by death. I know certain things about death. One thing I'll tell you, death is cruel. Don't have any illusions. But Jesus has taken the sting out of death. When my first wife died I had been a preacher for at least thirty years. I faced a personal crisis. I said to myself do I really believe in the resurrection? I've preached it, do I believe it? And I had a struggle. But I said yes, I believe in the resurrection. I believe I'll meet my wife again. We're not separated forever. That was a turning point in my life.

So, it's important that we take these doctrines beyond this life and into eternity. Because, that's where we're all going to end. None of us has a permanent residence here. And if you're acting as though you're going to be here permanently you're silly and you're going to be disillusioned. And, maybe shocked and maybe even lose your faith! It's a very serious issue, it's not a trifling issue.

Let's then look to these two doctrines that pass beyond time and into eternity. I hope by faith you can follow me because it's an exciting journey.

Let's look at the resurrection of the dead. And bear in mind it's a resurrection of dead bodies. Romans 4:22–25, talking about Abraham, it says:

> It was accounted to him for righteousness [that he believed God]. Now not written for his sake alone that it was imputed to him, but also for us. It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead . . .

You've got to believe in God who raised Jesus.

> . . . who was delivered up for our offenses, and was raised for our justification.

You are not justified unless you believe in the resurrection of Jesus. If you just believe in Him as a teacher, that doesn't cover it.

And in Romans 10:9 it says:

> If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

But if you don't believe in the resurrection of Jesus, you cannot be saved. And unfortunately there are thousands of ministers professing to be Christians who deny the resurrection. My own nation of Britain is riddled with bishops and others who flatly deny the physical resurrection of Jesus. And, they get a lot of prayer.

And then in 1 Corinthians 15:12–17:

> Now if Christ is preached that He's been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen; and if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is vain and your faith is also vain. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up, if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen; and if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins.

There is no way to escape from sin apart from believing in the physical resurrection of Jesus.

Then in 1 Corinthians 15:35 Paul points out in all the following verses it's the body that's going to be resurrected.

> But someone will say how are the dead raised up, and with what body do they come?

And he goes into an elaborate explanation of the changes in our body. I won't go into all the passages but in the following verses he indicates five changes that will take place, five ways in which our resurrection body will be different from our present body. And, they're good news.

Number one, a change from corruption to incorruption. You'll have a body that does not decay. Our hair will never fall out, our skin will never get wrinkled—that's right. I'm glad you said that because it's good news.

Number two, from dishonor to glory. Our present body is a dishonorable body. I'll explain a little more why that is. But we're going to one that's glorious.

From weakness to power.

From a natural or a soulish body to a spiritual body. That's a really interesting theme. When it says in these versions "natural," the Greek word is ?*pseuchekos*? which is soulish. So, what's the difference between a soulish body and a spiritual body, a ?*pneumatikos*? body? You're entitled to your opinion. I believe that somehow our resurrection body will be directly controlled by our spirit, whereas at the moment the spirit has to work through the soul to get the body to do things. David said, "Bless the Lord, O my soul." His spirit was ready but he couldn't do it until his soul cooperated. Now this is just a theory of mine and you're entitled to your own. And if you disagree with me you can still go to heaven!

The fifth change is from mortal to immortal—deathless.

I'm going to repeat those, I feel good when I say them.

From corruption to incorruption. Or, from decay to non-decay.

From dishonor to glory.

From weakness to power.

From natural or soulish to spiritual.

And from mortal to immortal.

And then something even more exciting in Philippians 3:21, we better read verse 20:

> For our citizenship is in heaven . . .

I have three citizenships. I'm a citizen of the United Kingdom, I'm a citizen of the United States and more important, I'm a citizen of heaven. And I have a passport for each.

> For our citizenship is in heaven from which we also eagerly wait for the savior, the Lord Jesus Christ . . .

Let me ask you, are you eagerly waiting for the savior? Because, He's going to come for those who eagerly expect Him, He's not coming for any other people.

Now, this is what He's going to do:

> . . . who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

Now where the translation says "our lowly body" and "glorious body," the Greek says "a body of humiliation" and "a body of glory." So our present body is a body of humiliation. But, we're going to have a body of glory which will be like the body of Jesus.

In what way is our present body a body of humiliation? It continually reminds us we are fallen. And the way our body acts doesn't leave us free for twenty-four hours to forget the fact that we're fallen creatures. You can eat the most gorgeous meal and drink the most delicious drink but within a few hours you'll have to empty your bladder and your bowels. And no one has ever done that in a dignified way! That's where dignity ends. You may clothe yourself with the most wonderful garments but when you get a little bit hot you're going to perspire or, sweat. And that's going to remind you it's a body of humiliation. God doesn't intend us to have any opportunity to forget that we've been humiliated because of the fall. But the good news is it isn't going to last forever. When we're resurrected we're going to have a body of glory. Amen! Alleluia! Thank you, Lord.

One more thing from Philippians. And again, this is very little appreciated by most Christians but it seems to me that it's important. In Philippians 3:10–11 Paul states the goal of his Christian living. And he hadn't attained it. So if Paul hadn't attained it, brothers and sisters, I doubt whether you have. But don't act as though you have. He says:

> That I may know Him [that's Jesus] . . .

Now Paul had been saved, baptized in the Holy Spirit and been an apostle for years but he said my aim is to know Him. You don't know Him when you get saved, you just begin an acquaintance. One sure test is do you love? He who does not love does not know God.

I preached a message in Boynton Beach last Sunday about being saved by a stranger. You got saved, the man jumped into the river, pulled you out, put you in his car, drove you to his home, changed your

clothes and sent you back where you belong. He said, "Here's my phone number, call me up." And you've never made any further contact. The man who saved you is a stranger to you. And for many of you, Jesus is still a stranger. You're saved by a stranger. Paul said:

> That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His suffering, being conformed to His death.

I read that verse for many years and I had to say to myself, "God, I believe it but I can't say it. I'm not so excited about knowing the fellowship of your suffering." I think I see things from a slightly different aspect today. But really, without suffering there's a limit to how much you know Jesus.

Now then, this is the punch line.

> If by any means I may attain [to what?] to the resurrection of the dead . . .

Not to heaven. Heaven is not the goal. Heaven is a blessed stop off but it's not where it ends. When we're in heaven our bodies will be decomposing in the earth. That's no mark of Christ's victory because He defeated death. His work is not complete until we have our resurrection body. Then we can say death has been swallowed up by victory.

There's very little in the New Testament about getting to heaven. I mean, thank God for heaven. Don't let me by any means belittle heaven. But, it is not the destination. The destination is the resurrection. I am excited about the resurrection, I don't know whether you are. It's become very vivid for me. We know certain things are going to happen. There's going to be a shofar, a trumpet call. I think when you hear that the hair will stand up on the back of your neck, if you've still got some. And then the Lord is going to shout.

There's a lot of passages in the Bible about God shouting, did you know that? There's a lot of passages about saints shouting, too. And shouting is not singing aloud, it's shouting.

And then you're going to hear the voice of the archangel, I think that's the way it goes. And, something dramatic is going to happen. There you are, sitting next to your wife. And there's a blinding

flash and you blink involuntarily. And when you look again you're looking at a different person, totally transformed, glorified. And incidentally, no longer your wife. It's dramatic. You see, God never is the God of the anticlimax. Anything God does in the end is dramatic. This is going to be the culmination and the climax of all history. And God has got it worked out, He's setting the stage and He's got the cast. I have to say I'm sorry for you if you don't get excited because I could be jumping up and down right now. Something is touching my body; I have a sense of electricity. It's a kind of little anticipation of what's going to happen.

And if you're in the grave, I don't know exactly how it will happen but you'll emerge and lift up into the air to meet the Lord.

So, what's your aim in being a Christian? How far ahead are you looking? Are you looking beyond the grave? You know that old poem, "Life is real and life is earnest, and the grave is not the goal. Dust thou art, to dust returneth was not spoken of the soul." Was that Longfellow? I think it was. Anyhow. It's true. But life is real and life is earnest, we've got to win the race. We've got to hold fast to the end, we've got to press toward the goal. When you get a vision of the goal it's much easier to press towards.

It's like that with slimming. None of you have ever practiced that but the people who succeed are the people who have a vision. That's the only thing that will enable you to go through with all the self denial and the discipline. You see yourself the way you want to be. And every time you're tempted, mentally you see this vision and say I'm going to hold out, I'm not going to give in because I've got a goal.

See, vision, as I understand it, is the motivation for living. Where there is vision, the Bible says, the people cast off restraint. That's true about slimming. If you don't have a vision you'll cast off restraint. Now I'm not trying to describe exactly the perfect weight for everybody but I'm just using an analogy that's down to earth. You need a vision.

Steve was saying that to his staff today. Without a vision it won't work. And that's true of the Christian life. The people who get things done for the Lord are people with vision. Of course, you've got to have more than vision. A vision without a task, somebody said, makes a visionary. A task without a

vision makes misery. But a vision with a task makes a missionary. If you have a vision, pray and ask God and He'll give you a vision for your own life. Something unique and personal that God wants to make out of you.

Let's go on to eternal judgment. I used to market this teaching in seven successive books, the sixth was named *Resurrection of the Dead*, the seventh was named *Eternal Judgment*. It was a funny thing, a lot of peopled didn't want to buy book number seven. But book number seven is there, you can't get away with it.

We must go on quickly. I want to say there are two kinds of judgment in the Bible and if you don't understand this you'll become confused.

Number one, judgment in time or historical judgment. And the Bible is full of that. The destruction of Jericho was an historical judgment. The destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah was an historical judgment. And some of those are pattern judgments. God has revealed His attitude towards certain things and He doesn't keep repeating the judgment but the attitude remains unchanged. Ananias and Sapphira was a pattern judgment. There have been a lot of Ananias' and Sapphira's who've got away without dying but God's attitude hasn't changed.

In Exodus 20:3–6 you find in the Ten Commandments God declares what I would call historical judgments. He says in verse 3 and following:

> "You shall have no other gods before me or beside me. You shall not make for yourself any carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them nor serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me."

That is God's judgment in time. And children do suffer for the sins of their parents. I mean, it's no good arguing about that. Take the extreme case of a baby that's born of a mother with AIDS. The baby is going to suffer. The child of an alcoholic. Many different kinds of suffering. Most of us are enduring some things in our lives because of our ancestor's sins.

I have a book called *Blessing or Curse, You Can Choose*, which deals with the whole area of historical

judgments. And, there are ways that we can come out from under the effects of some of them, not all of them. But those are only the historical judgments.

Now we come to what the Bible comes eternal judgment, judgments that are out of time. The word eternal means something that is out of time, it's in a different realm. And the principle of eternal judgment is stated in Ezekiel 18:20. Very simple, Ezekiel 18:20:

> The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.

When it comes to stepping out of time into eternity we don't answer for anybody's life except our own. Our righteousness will be upon us, our sin will be upon us, it will not affect anybody else but us. We'll answer as individuals to God.

Now there are also two scenes of judgment.

The first is the judgment seat of Christ. The Greek word is *bema*, which is used of what Pontius Pilate was on when he tried Jesus. It's essentially a sort of magistrate's judgment seat. There is somewhere where we're all going to meet. It's one appointment we'll all keep. Nobody is going to skip this appointment. You may miss every appointment in time but you're going to keep this one.

Let's look in Romans 14:10–13:

> But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

We Christians. We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. I think I'd like you to say that.

We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

Let's say it again: "We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ."

> "For it is written, 'As I live,' says the Lord, 'every knee shall bow to me and every tongue shall confess to God.'"

So then, each of us shall give account of himself to God. Not of anybody else. But we all have to give an account of ourself.

And then Paul says so why bother judging other people?

> Therefore, let us not judge one another any more, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or cause to fall in our brother's way.

Most of the people who spend their time criticizing others overlook the fact that they're going to stand before the judgment seat of Christ, otherwise they wouldn't do it.

And then the same truth is stated in 2 Corinthians 5:9–11:

> Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

Whether we're in the body or out of it, we have one aim, to please God. Verse 10:

> For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body . . .

In this earthly life we're going to have to give an account of everything we've done.

> . . . according to what is done, whether good or bad.

And notice there are only two categories, good or bad. Whatever is not good is bad. Whatever is not positive is negative. Jesus says he that is not with me is against me. There are only two relationships. He that does not gather with me scatters abroad. And many Christians are scattering abroad, they're wasting time, money, talents, on things that are trivial and temporary. And we're going to have to give an account for what we've done.

Now I want to say firmly the judgment seat of Christ is not for condemnation. There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. It's for the apportioning of rewards. And even if you

get no reward you'll escape as a soul through the flames. You'll come without anything but you'll be saved. However, that's not the best desire, that's not an ambition. The ambition is to have that which pleases Jesus.

And then Paul says this in verse 11:

> Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord we persuade men, but we are well known to God and I also trust are well known in your consciences.

How many of us know the terror of the Lord? See? I think in much contemporary preaching there is nothing of the terror of the Lord. And if we don't know the terror of the Lord we don't persuade men. Preaching is a serious business. I ask myself, I'm not challenging anybody else but myself, do I realize what it means to be a lost soul? Again, that's something that's very little talked about today. But most of the really successful evangelists have had a clear vision of the awful destiny of the lost. And it hasn't changed. We may not talk about it but it's still there.

Now let's consider the question of reward for a moment. In Luke 19 there's a parable of the minas, or the pounds. The mina was a certain unit of money. And this nobleman went away and he had ten servants, and he gave each of them one mina, which was pretty valuable, and said, "Now, do business with this till I come back." And when he came back he took an account of his servants. And there are only three that are mentioned. It's very interesting because it's very exact. It says in verse 15:

> And so it was when he returned, having received the kingdom, he then commanded these servants to whom he had given the money to be called to him that he might know how much every man had gained by trading. Then came the first, saying, "Master, your mina has earned ten minas."

And I think it's really significant he didn't say "I have earned ten minas," he said "your mina has earned ten minas." In other words, it's what God has put in you that's the only thing with which you can earn.

> And the lord said to him, "Well done, good servant. Because you were faithful in very little, have authority over ten cities."

In other words, one city for every mina he had gained. So, the reward will be proportional to the increase.

> The second came, saying, "Master, your mina has earned five minas." Likewise he said to him, "You also be over five cities."

Notice he didn't say well done faithful servant. He still got promotion but he didn't get the particular recognition.

> Then another came, saying, "Master, here is your mina which I have kept put away in a handkerchief. For I feared you because you are an austere man. You collect what you do not deposit and reap what you do not sow." And he said to him, "Out of your own mouth I will judge you, you wicked servant. You knew that I was an austere man, collecting what I did not deposit and reaping what I did not sow. Why then did you not put my money in the bank that at my coming I might have collected it with interest?"

How would you interpret that? One suggestion I have is if you don't have a ministry of your own, invest in somebody who does. Invest in a fruitful ministry. Invest your prayer, invest your offering. Put it in the bank and it will automatically bring interest. But don't leave it lying in the earth.

> Then he said to those who stood by, "Take the mina from him and give it to him who has ten minas." But they said to him, "Master, he has ten minas."

I can just understand that. Well, this man's got more than the others, why give him more? The answer is because he's the one who chose to do best with it. God is very practical. He's a realist. If you were going to invest money, would you invest in a man who only delivers five times or delivers ten times?

> "For I say to you that every one who has will be given, and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him."

These are so important principles. A good many years ago, and probably some of you know, God led me into a ministry of lengthening people's legs. Did anybody have their legs lengthened by me here? All

right. So you know it's real. I continually meet people fifteen years later who tell me how they got healed. I mean, permanent healing. Well, it's not necessarily the most respectable form of ministry to go around kneeling in front of people, holding their feet and watching them grow out. And some of my good brothers said to me this isn't very dignified, it's not right for you to be doing it. So I thought I'll consult the Lord and see what He has to say. And He gave me a very clear answer. He said, "I've given you a gift. There are two things you can do with it. You can use it and get more or you can fail to use it and lose it." I said, "Lord, I'll go for the first." But that's true of every gift. If you use it you'll get more and if you fail to use it you'll lose it.

Then he said in the other parable, the parable of the talents, the man who gained nothing, the Lord said:

"Cast the unprofitable servant out into darkness."

We don't know what he did to this man because it's not stated. Listen now, you will object to this but it's here in the Bible. This master is clearly a type of Jesus, isn't that right? And the last thing he says is, "Bring here those enemies of mine who did not want me to reign over them, and slay them before me." Does your picture of Christ make room for that? He's not only the savior, He's the judge. And He's just as faithful and efficient as judge as He was a savior. So we have to choose. Are we going to meet Him as savior or are we going to meet Him as judge? But those are the principles of reward.

And then we have the final scene of judgment which we won't spend long on, it's the great white throne in Revelation 20:11–15. I'm coming near the end, you've been patient.

> Then I saw a great white throne, and Him who sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.

Think of standing in front of a God from whose face heaven and earth have fled away. That would be frightening.

And I saw the dead, small and great, standing before God, and books were opened.

The Greek says really scrolls were opened. You know they didn't have books and pages, they had scrolls, very much like audio or video cassettes, much more like that than a book with pages. And I have always felt for years that there will be a cassette played for every single person. I think it'll be a video cassette. I think we'll see our own lives played back. And it will be useless to say, "God, I didn't say that," or "I didn't do that," because it will be right there in front of us.

> And another book was opened which is the Book of Life, and the dead were judged according to their works by the things which were written in the books. And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, and death and Hades delivered up the dead who were in them, and they were judged each one according to his works. Then death and Hades were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire.

That's the end of judgment as far as I know. So every one of us has to ask ourselves is my name written in the Book of Life? But we will not stand before that judgment if we're believers, we will have already passed through our judgment. And there will be no condemnation for true believers.

Now I just want you to see in closing how perfect this list of six doctrines is because it starts right at the beginning with repentance and takes us all the way through out of time into eternity and closes with the final judgment. I don't believe anybody could have produced anything so totally perfect without the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. I want to commend these doctrines to you because I believe they are the foundation. You can go to a lot of conferences and meetings and hear a lot of good sermons but if you don't have a foundation you can't build, God won't give you a permit. So you'll just pile up a marble bath here, an oak door there, television set there, but no building. Building is hard work.

So, are you building? Have you laid a foundation? You can't build till you've laid the foundation.

And also, I believe times of tremendous stress are coming on the world and on the United States. I think you have to decide and I have to decide do I have a foundation that will stand the storm? So I want to leave that question with you. I tend to end and just walk off. But I think I shouldn't do that. So I want to give you an opportunity if you feel so moved to make a response to the message I've brought. I think

the question I would like to ask you is are you confident that you are building on a solid foundation a life that will stand the test? And, are you going to be ready to stand before the judgment seat of Christ? Now, only one person can answer that question, that is you.

But if you've been confronted by the fact tonight that you are not where you ought to be spiritually, but you don't want to stay there, I want to do one thing and only one thing tonight. And, that is pray for you that God will give you the grace to change. You know there are two things, sympathy and compassion. Sympathy is soulish. "Poor you. Nobody's treating you right." Compassion says, "I love you but you have to change." God doesn't deal out sympathy but He moves out of compassion. So, if you want to acknowledge before God and us that you are not where you know you ought to be tonight spiritually, and you want to change with God's help, and you would like our prayers, there's just one thing you can do, stand to your feet wherever you are in this auditorium. I'm going to ask the pastor to come up and maybe—are you the co-pastor? I'm going to ask my wife to come, too, because I pray better with her beside me.

Now this is a serious moment. It can produce a significant change. But it will only produce a change if you let it.

> Father, we come to you now in the precious name of Jesus our savior who loved us and gave Himself for us that He might redeem us from every lawless deed, and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works. Lord, we want to see these people numbered amongst those you call your own special people who are zealous for good works. And where there is need of repentance and change, where they need to change their minds about the way they've been living, Father, tonight we ask you by the Holy Spirit, minister the grace that they need to make the change they've acknowledged they need. Lord, they cannot do it without you. But, you will not do it without them. And so we pray for a deep, permanent work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of those who stood. O God, have mercy, we pray. Have mercy. In wrath, Lord, remember mercy, we pray. Have mercy, Lord. We will thank you, Lord, for all the good you give us. We'll give you all the glory. In the precious name of Jesus. Amen.