

**“The Church’s Firm Foundation”**  
**Acts 2:42, 2 Peter 1:12-21**  
**Sermon Series: “More Than A Building”**

**Introduction:** Sam Harris, a popular atheist writer and speaker, says, “Tell a devout Christian that his wife is cheating on him, or that frozen yogurt can make a man invisible, and he is likely to require as much evidence as anyone else. Tell him that the book he keeps by his bed was written by an invisible deity who will punish him with fire for eternity if he fails to accept its every incredible claim about the universe, and he seems to require no evidence whatsoever.”

-Richard Dawkins writes:

-Creation, virgin birth, resurrection, sin, absolutes

**Why do Christians and churches base their beliefs and lives on a 2000 year old book? Don’t you know better than that? Don’t you know that we’re more enlightened than that now with science, technology, knowledge, etc.?**

-Not being on the fence or capitulating to please others (my experience at CN and how liberal denominations are dying {who’s getting out of bed for a metaphorical resurrection, much less giving your time and money or even your life for the mission})

**-Read Acts 2:42-**

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers.”

**Main Idea: The Church is not built with brick and mortar but with the truth of the Apostles’ teaching.**

John Stott has written, “The very first evidence Luke mentions of the Spirit’s presence in the church is *that they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching*. One might perhaps say that the Holy Spirit opened a school in Jerusalem that day; its teachers were the apostles whom Jesus had appointed; and there were 3,000 pupils in the kindergarten! We note

that those new converts were not enjoying a mystical experience which led them to despise their mind or disdain theology. Anti-intellectualism and the fullness of the Spirit are mutually incompatible, because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. Nor did those early disciples imagine that, because they had received the Spirit, he was the only teacher they needed and they could dispense with human teachers. On the contrary, they sat at the apostles' feet, hungry to receive instruction, and they persevered in it.... Since the teaching of the new apostles has come down to us in its definitive form in the New Testament, contemporary devotion to the apostles' teaching will mean submission to the authority of the New Testament church, in the sense that it studies and submits to New Testament instruction. The Spirit of God leads the people of God to submit to the Word of God."

### **Why should we believe and follow the apostle's teaching today?**

**1. The apostles' teaching is the truth of God for all generations recorded in the New Testament (2 Peter 1:12-15- 12** "For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are **established [firmly established]** in the present truth. **13** Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding *you*, **14** knowing that shortly I *must* put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. **15** Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.)."

James Montgomery Boice writes, "A Spirit-filled church always studies the apostolic teaching. It is a learning church that grounds its experiences in and tests those experiences by the Word of God.

We live in a different age, of course. We live thousands of years after this teaching. Peter is not with us. James was martyred. John has died. So have all the others. Even Paul, who came along later, has gone. How is it possible for us to focus on the apostolic teaching? These men gave us the New Testament. This is the deposit of their teaching. When it came time to collect the books that were to become our New Testament, the criterion by which that was done was whether they came from the

apostles or bore the apostolic blessing. Moreover, the fact that we have our New Testament is a fulfillment of what Jesus Christ said he would do through these apostles. In order for us to copy the New Testament church at this point, as we should, we are to study the book these men have left us. It is in the New Testament that the authentic teaching of the Lord Jesus Christ is to be found.”

**-Jude 3-** “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you exhorting you to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints.” **If something is true, it is true for all people in all places at all times in all circumstances. Anytime anyone says “my truth” they are making a contradictory statement.**

**Application:** It is through knowing the Scripture that we are firmly established in the truth.

**For Christians: Boice:** “A Spirit-filled church is always going to be a Bible studying church. Those two things go together. What is true of the church is true for individuals also. If you are Spirit-filled, then you will be drawn to this Book.” **(My mom’s story about what nanny said about her learning to cook, Bart Erhman about people reading the Bible when he asks in class)**

Church: Preach the Word, study it in homes-small groups (Acts 20:20), function according to it and live it out

**Non-Christians:** Francis Shaeffer said, “Modern man has both feet firmly planted in mid air.”

**-Circle back to where I started and show how secular beliefs don’t really make sense**

-Everything came from nothing

-Truth when saying there are no absolutes is stating an absolute

-Soulless but desire love, beauty, truth, goodness, peace, hope

-No sin or judgment but canceling people

-Resurrection can't happen because resurrections don't happen-unless it did, how can you decide up front without looking at the evidence (that's neither science or history but is actually philosophy based on the faith position that we live in a closed universe)

-Virgin birth but I can claim to be a woman and we have pregnant men emojis now

## **2. The apostles' teaching is the eyewitness testimony of Jesus Christ**

**(2 Peter 1:16-18-** For we did not follow cunningly devised fables [myths-legends that arose over time] when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were **eyewitnesses** of His majesty. **17** For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." **18** And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain.).

**Why believe this?** Here are three tests, with the wording of them coming from Sean McDowell, of the reliability of the historical record.

**Test #1: The Telephone Test-(Telephone game)** Do we have the actual text of Scripture? How many manuscripts do we have? How far in between them? How much have they changed?

Let me give you some information about the New Testament. Scholars have about 24,000 copies of, at least, parts of the New Testament in Greek and in other languages. It breaks down to over 5,600 Greek copies and close to 19,000 from other languages. Now, I am not talking about translations, I am talking about actual copies. The New Testament was written between about 40 and 100 A.D. The earliest copy archaeologists have discovered has been dated to about 125 A.D. It is a portion of the Gospel of John called the Rylands papyri. That discovery effectively disproved the claim of liberal scholars that the gospels were not written until the second or third century. It means that there was somewhere around 25 years between the original writings and

the first copy that we have. It means that there was not sufficient time for legends about Jesus to spring up and be accepted.

Now, let's compare the New Testament with another work of ancient literature. Homer wrote "The Iliad," which scholars say was the most read book in ancient literature. It was written about 900 B.C. The earliest copy that scholars have is 400 B.C. which means there is 500 years difference between the original and the first copy. Now, the number of copies that scholars have of that work is 643. And there are more copies of that than any other work in ancient literature. As far as secular books, this is the cream of the crop as far as number and age difference of copies. But you see how it compares with the New Testament. Therefore, if you can't trust the authenticity of the Bible, you cannot trust the authenticity of "The Iliad" or any work of antiquity. Other works of Roman history in comparison to the manuscript evidence for the New Testament and the question of why would a Jewish carpenter from an obscure village like Nazareth have such an explosion of writing about him (Andy Stanley). There are also the writings of the early church fathers and the comparison to Shakespeare.

**Bruce Metzger-99.6%, Daniel Wallace-99.8%**

**2. Corroboration Test: (Check out the alibi, can anyone corroborate the story?)** Do other historical materials confirm or deny the testimony provided by the documents themselves? The documents themselves and bias about them.

A. Historical Evidence: Consider the following evidence outside the New Testament regarding the writers of the gospels and for Jesus Himself.

-Irenaeus (180 AD): "Matthew published his own Gospel among the Hebrews in their own tongue, when Peter and Paul were preaching the Gospel in Rome and founding the church there. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, himself handed down to us in writing the substance of Peter's preaching. Luke, the follower of Paul, set down in a book the Gospel preached by his teacher. Then John, the disciple of the Lord, who also leaned on his breast, himself produced his Gospel while he was living at Ephesus in Asia."

-Tacitus, a Roman governor and historian, writing around 100 A.D. in

his Annals, wrote the following, "...availed to relieve Nero from the infamy of being believed to have ordered the conflagration, the fire of Rome. Hence, to suppress the rumor, he falsely charged with the guilt, and punished with the most exquisite tortures, the persons commonly called Christians, who were hated for their enormities. Christus, the founder of the name, was put to death by Pontius Pilate, procurator of Judea in the reign of Tiberius, but the pernicious superstition, repressed for a time broke out again, not only through Judea, where the mischief originated, but through the city of Rome also."

-Lucian of Samosata, 2nd century satirist, wrote, "...the man who was crucified in Palestine because he introduced this new cult into the world...Furthermore, their first lawgiver persuaded them they are all brothers one of another after they have transgressed once for all by denying the Greek gods and by worshipping that crucified sophist himself and living under his laws."

-Pliny the Younger, governor of Bithynia in Asia Minor (A.D. 112) was writing the emperor Trajan seeking counsel on how to treat the Christians (he had been asking them to deny their faith and killing them when they didn't). He wrote, "They affirmed, however, that the whole of their guilt, or their error, was, that they were in the habit of meeting on a certain fixed day before it was light, when they sang in alternate verse a hymn to Christ as to a god, and bound themselves to a solemn oath, not to any wicked deeds..."

### **B. Archaeological Evidence:**

-Let me give you a quote from one of the most famous archeologists who ever lived, a man by the name of Nelson Glueck. He said that "it may be stated categorically that no archeological discovery has ever controverted" [meaning contradicted] a biblical reference."

-F.F. Bruce says, "Where Luke has been suspected of inaccuracy (Sir William Ramsey), and accuracy has been vindicated by some inscriptional evidence, it may be legitimate to say archaeology has confirmed the New Testament record."

-Miller Burrows of Yale observes, "Archaeology has in many cases refuted the views of the modern critics."

**3. The Honesty Test:** Sean McDowell offers 3 questions to regarding this test.

Question #1-Does the document claim to be purporting truth? The answer is yes (Peter's testimony, John's testimony, Luke's testimony, Paul's testimony).

Question #2-Do they record things that are embarrassing to themselves? The answer is yes. This is called the criterion of embarrassment. We don't normally make up things to make ourselves look bad. Here are some examples: Peter denies Jesus, Jesus calls Peter Satan, Paul rebukes Peter, fall asleep on Jesus, fight amongst each other, don't understand what Jesus is saying, women discover the empty tomb, **the teaching of grace as opposed to works**

Question #3-What did it cost them? Only their lives. Who would knowingly die for a lie?

### **Why did he use the Transfiguration as the example?**

'Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; **2** and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. **3** And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. **4** Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, [a]let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."**5** While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" **6** And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. **7** But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." **8** When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.**9** Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead."

**Everything, including the resurrection, is wrapped up in this passage is the first reason. The second is that they saw His majesty and that is what changes us and what this is all about.**

**Application: Repent and trust Jesus as your Lord and Savior because of the eyewitness testimony**

**(2 Timothy 3:15-** and that from childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.).

**3. The apostles' teaching recorded in the New Testament is inspired by the Holy Spirit**

**(2 Peter 1:19-21-** And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts; **20** knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, **21** for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke *as they were* moved by the Holy Spirit.).

**2 Timothy 3:16-17-** ‘All Scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, **17** that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.’

2 Peter 3:15-16: “And consider *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation—as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given to him, has written to you, **16** as also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, which untaught and unstable *people* twist to their own destruction, as *they do* also the rest of the Scriptures.”

**Application: Submit to the authority of Scripture (“which you do well to heed”). The authority of Scripture means that God said it, that settles it, we must obey.**

-Examples of the Apostles submitting to the authority of Scripture in the book of Acts and how this applies to us today

**Conclusion: What are you basing your life on?  
Who or what are you trusting in to save you?**



## **What is the source of authority in your life?**

If you know this in your heart, are you willing to act on it in faith? You're considering it because of the work of the Spirit of God. You know through creation that there is a God, through your conscience that you are a sinner, and that there is something more because God has put eternity in your heart.