

1 Timothy 6:19

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[0 : 00] 1 Timothy chapter 6, we read it, verse 19. Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come. And of course, a foundation is essential to whatever we may seek to build.

But one of the things about a foundation is that it is hidden. Nobody sees it once the building or the car park or a piece of ground is completed up on the top of it.

Nobody can tell just by looking whether your foundation is, as the parable has it, built either on rock or on sand. They'll see why you're doing it and they'll see the preparing of it.

But once the work is complete, nobody can tell what sort of foundation you've got underneath. And it is possible, of course, to make an outward show, as people did in Jesus' day, of course, of outward goodness or outward religion or godliness or whatever.

[1 : 08] But there was no foundation. And others, likewise, who had that foundation, but their work on top of it didn't seem to be all that great, certainly in the eyes of some people.

But, of course, Jesus makes clear through his word, as Paul writes to the Corinthians, that other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Now, if any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall be cleared, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is.

And Paul goes on to say that even if all your work is destroyed, you won't be lost if your foundation is solid, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation.

A foundation is, by definition, hidden. But just because it is hidden doesn't mean it is not important. We may content ourselves with such a work of outward Christianity, as will be seen by others, and we're not too worried about what everybody doesn't see, the sort of sweeping of the dirt under the carpet, cutting corners and so on, because nobody will see these things.

[2 : 30] But the day will soon declare it, whether our foundation is rock or whether it is sand. And because a foundation is hidden, the fact that if a foundation can be seen at all, then it is by definition incomplete.

Sometimes you can see, you know, on building sites and so on, moving in the hard core and the dumper trucks pouring out all the rocks and so on. And the fact that you can see the foundation still or that it's being made means that the work is not only incomplete, it's barely started.

And it's great when we see people converted. It's great when people are new and young in the faith. And we can see, yes, that's somebody else in the kingdom. And we can see, yes, there's the foundation that's being laid.

And we are conscious that such souls are building on the hard core. But the very fact that we can still see a foundation, that we are around when these people testify in other congregations or whether here or elsewhere, people coming to the Lord, it's great.

But if we are there to see it, then it means it's still new. It's still fresh. People who maybe came to faith 40 years ago, 50 years ago, we weren't there maybe to see it or maybe we were, but that's previous now.

[3 : 47] They've built since on that foundation. If we can still see the foundation, the building is still new. The work is still fresh. It's still raw.

In a sense, it hasn't begun yet to be complete. If the foundation can be seen, then it is still at an early stage.

All foundations, once they are doing the job for which they are designed, will be hidden. But it is still vital that they may be made of the right materials.

So a foundation is not just fitting, then. It is also, if it is to be of any use, it must be solid. It must be hardcore rock. We've made reference to 1 Corinthians 3.

Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ. It means that the laying of that foundation is not going to be soft or easy work.

[4 : 46] Now perhaps the means by which, if you think back, if you're already a professing believer, and if you're not, maybe you're just in the way to that, or maybe you're still wrestling with the Lord and still struggling on.

Perhaps the means by which the Lord brought you to himself was a painful means. Perhaps it was a hard struggle. A difficult wrestling against many painful providences.

Perhaps that's what you're going through now. And you haven't yet professed faith in the Lord. And maybe it's because it's so hard and it's so difficult, you think, this can't possibly be of the Lord. You think, this is too painful.

This is too difficult. Perhaps the means the Lord was using in your life, or is using now, may be a difficult set of circumstances. A hard road.

But it will be partly because of that. That your faith, if it blossoms, if it flowers, or if it did blossom in the past, will be stronger than it would otherwise be.

[5 : 51] As Jesus told in the parable, anything that is built on sand, it may be soft, it may be easy to transport, it may be easy to smooth out and build up, but it ain't no foundation.

And as soon as they go and get stuff, it's all going to melt away. It's all going to be swept away by the first little flood. It'll just pour away to the side. Anything built on it will split and fall down.

It is because the road is hard, or was hard, that you were able to know this was the rock. This was the difficult, hard slog that was part of the foundation of which the Lord intended to build such faith as I have.

And if that's what you're going through to smoke, and you think, well, the Lord can't possibly love me, he can't possibly be concerned with me, or I wouldn't be having all these hard rocks in the way. It would be a smooth way.

Yes, it would be narrow, but it would be straightforward. Well, that's not what Scripture tells us, is it? It says, you know, not only narrow is the gate, but hard is the way, difficult, tight is the way that leads to eternal life.

[7 : 02] Here there be that find it is broad and easy and smooth, the road that leads to destruction. If you're going through the rocks and boulders just now, if they seem to be piling in on top of you, and if it seems this is too hard, it is because it is so hard.

The Lord is building and strengthening your faith. When you see people, or if you see people, I don't know if you do, in the gym, they're lifting weights, or they're pumping iron, or they're working the bikes that don't go anywhere, or they're running on the treadmill or whatever, they're not just doing the light, easy stuff and lifting a couple of wee tennis balls or whatever.

You know, they're straining, they're working, they're sweating, they're pawning. Why don't they just do the light, easy stuff? Why don't they just lift a wee bit that's not going to strain them too much so they don't break sweat?

Why don't they just do wee, slow bits on the bike or just a wee kind of walk on the treadmill? Why don't they just do a couple of wee push-ups and say, right, that's me? Because that wouldn't strengthen their muscles, that wouldn't tone and train their body at all.

It has to be hard. It has to be straining. Otherwise, if it's not hard, if it's not rock, it's not going to do the body any good, and without the spiritual hard core, it's not going to do the soul any good.

[8 : 21] It is because of the hardness of the foundation that the Lord lays in your life, that your faith is able to be built on something strong.

And it is because, perhaps, oh, how hard it may have been to get this far, that when the tempter comes to you and says, come on, this is rubbish what you believe in.

This Lord, this Father, he doesn't love you. He doesn't care about you. And besides, if you were a real Christian, you wouldn't be guilty of this, of this, of this. He wouldn't have fallen there.

He's not going to love you anymore. He may have done once, but my goodness, he's going to be so fed up with you now. He's going to turn away from you. He doesn't love you anymore. Part of the knowledge of what will enable you to turn down and say, get behind me saying, go away.

I'm not listening to you. It's because of how hard it has been just to get where you are. That hard core, that foundation, is the reason you're not going to say, oh, I'm not going to pick all this stuff

back up again and transport it back again.

[9 : 25] I'm not going to throw away all the hard slog, all the rock foundation that's been so difficult to get this far. Then if I get it, it's open for nothing.

It's hard work, building a foundation. Whether you're lugging in the hard core and pouring it into the hole, or whether you're actually building on a rock already, you're still going to dig down into it. And that's hard work too. And all that you've done this far. If it's not all going to be for nothing, if it's not all going to be a waste of your time and your life, then you're going to think, well, come on, I've come this far.

Satan, go away, because I'm not going to throw it all away. This wasn't for nothing. I can't afford for this amount of investment of my life and my time and my years to have all been for nothing. I have to go on. I can't go back now. I've come too far. It's been too hard. It can't be for nothing. I've got to go on.

[10 : 25] I've got less to lose now by going on with the Lord than I have if I turn back now and make all that hard slog for nothing.

Now it would all be for nothing if we turn away from the Lord. A foundation, if it is a good foundation, must be by definition hardcore.

Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come that they may lay hold on eternal life. It will be hidden.

It will be solid and it will be hardcore and making the foundation will not have come easy. As we say, either it has to be brought and placed there, you know, glories have to bring it from the quarries, pour it into the hole that's made or else if it's natural rock, you've got to dig into it. You're going to break it away, some of it. It's going to be difficult no matter what. But no matter what is done, there's no easy way of doing it, cutting and digging into the rock, bringing the heart of this, is the road the Lord calls us to.

[11 : 39] This is the road he trod himself and it is because of the cost that we dare not turn back. This laying up of the foundation, then it is against the time to come.

And again, if you think about it, every foundation, even if it is only for a flat surface like a car park or something, every foundation is always prepared for something else.

No foundation is having an end in itself. It is always for something that's going to follow. Nobody digs a big hole, pours into rocks and smooths them all over. You see this big pile of hard goes, oh, that's okay, that's my foundation.

I'm going to walk away now. I've done it. I've made a foundation. I'm not going to build anything on it. I'm not going to make any flat surface. I'm not going to build any house or any construction. That was just it. I wanted to make a foundation. I've done it.

That's me done. Nobody does that. Why bother? Why waste the time? Everything, every foundation that is laid, even if it be just for a flat surface, even if it just be for parking space, even if it just be for the most minuscule little building, every foundation is for something else.

[12 : 45] It is for something that is going to come afterwards. It is for that which is in the time to come whether a building, whether a surface, whatever, something which is yet to be done, that's why you lay the foundation.

It is never, ever an end in itself. It is always for something else that is yet to come, that is going to be built upon it.

And we're back again to this 1 Corinthians 3. Whatsoever anyone builds upon this foundation, whether it is gold or silver or precious stones, whether it's a costly, beautiful building of the best quality, or wood or hay or stubble, the poor quality, the poverty that we have, every man's work shall be made manifest, for the day shall be clear.

Because it shall be revealed by fire, the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. Any man's work abide, which he had built there, but he shall receive an award. Any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss, for he himself shall be saved.

Yet so as by fire. Because that which is to be built upon the foundation, that's why you made it in the first place. It's a foundation for that which is against the time to come.

[14 : 02] It's never an end in itself. It's always for future use. It is for a time to come. When we lay a foundation, we're effectively stating in faith, we believe there's something else to come.

We believe there is a better life, where it won't be slogged, where it won't be hardcore, where there won't always be pain and disappointment or tears and suffering for so many people.

Where the good won't be just the rain occasion or the breath of fresh air. It will be the norm. The Lord will wipe away all tears from off all faces. We believe in this.

That's why we lay the foundation. We believe in the time to come. Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come.

That they may lay hold on eternal life. Hold more securely. Not just touch it lightly. Not just sort of run their hand against it and walk away.

[15:00] Securely holding fast to somebody. The senses of being bound in to this eternal life. Laying hold upon eternal life.

Firmly. Securely. The more we invest of ourselves in the life of Christ, the more securely we are bound in with it.

Just like if you think about it, you know, the example of the hardcore, the foundation. The more effort you've gone to, the more time, the more expense you've done, laying in that foundation, the less it is worth your while chucking in the towel.

The less it is worth your while just walking away and saying, oh well, all that money I've spent, all that time I've taken, never mind. Just walk away. No, the more we are bound in with Christ, then the more secure is our hold upon it because we think, this can't all be for nothing.

All these years of trusting and believing in Christ, it can't all just be down in the drain. It can't all have been a lie. It can't be for nothing. And the further we go on, the more securely we are bound in with it.

[16:08] And you might think, yeah, well that's dependent upon having strong materials. That's dependent upon somebody being strong in a faith, being a godly soul, a prayerful soul. You know, that's for giants in the faith.

That's for saints of the Lord, you know, being secure. Look at me. I've got nothing. I'm not being secure in my faith. I'm secure in the Lord. I'm just an ordinary sinner. And so on.

It's not so much about what you've got. It's about what you do with it. If we're thinking about things that aren't strong, some of you will remember being at the congregational meal, you know, last December or maybe the one before that.

And some of the things we do, we play games there. One of the games that we've had in the past is sort of mummifying somebody. You know, one volunteer and the other one's got the toilet rolls and they wrap them round and round and they mummify their soul.

Now, if you happen to be the one who's standing there mummified at the end of it, it's not actually that easy to break out of the toilet roll wrapped round and round and round you. And yet, if you look at what toilet roll is, it's flimsy, it's thin, it's pathetic.

[17:15] And yet, if you wrap it round and round and round and round and round, you make a strong bond. You make it far more difficult to actually break that which is in itself flimsy, that which has in itself next to no strength.

If you're prepared to secure again and again and again and again, even with that tiny pathetic little thing of no strength, enough of it.

Round and round, bound tightly, secure, is a far stronger bond than you would imagine. It's not how great is your power or strength, it's what you do with what you have got.

Remember the woman with the alabaster, the jar of wine. Jesus said of her in Mark 14, verse 8, you know, she had done what she could.

She didn't have much, but what she had, she poured out upon the Lord. You see, what we can do with the little we have, it's an illustration.

[18:21] If you think of that game, you know, the congregation on the hill, it's an illustration, not the strength or richness of the material concern, but of what we're prepared to do with it. How much of ourselves, of our resources, of such strength, such ability, such power as we have, are we prepared to expend or to lavish on the cause of Christ?

Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. Now you might think, yeah, well, come on, he's always going on about context, every text, got a context.

What's the context of this one? Verses 17 to 90, charge them, that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertainty. This is all the rich men. That's okay.

I can sit back. I can, I can let them talk because it doesn't apply to me. I'm not rich. I'm just ordinary. You know, we all think of ourselves, oh, I'm not rich, you know.

But the thing about being rich, of course, is that it's, it's a relative term, isn't it? And the goalposts are always shifting. Now you'll be aware of yourselves, no doubt, that as well as the people carrier for the family, we now have a little run around polo there.

[19 : 35] It's old, it's on its last legs, and it's got lots of things wrong with it, but it's a great help to us. So we are now, in the Mansey, two-car family. Now, I can remember the day, not so very long ago, but if anybody, anybody at all had two cars, they were rich.

By definition, they were rich, because they had two cars. But now, so many people have got two cars. Even people who are comparatively impoverished should have two cars, if one of them is really old, and a real sort of run around bucket.

But still, having two cars at one time, that would be rich. When I first started in school, the richest boy in the school, the richest boy in the class, was defined as rich, because he had a colour television in his home.

Now we don't think anything about that. Colour television? Kids would say, you know, what other kind is, you know, what can you have? It's not colour. Well, they wouldn't remember black and white. Remember the time when the only people that had mobile phones would be stockbrokers and yuppies, and it would be great, big, huge brick-like things that nobody would be seen dead with now.

And now everybody's got mobile phones. Are we all rich now? Oh, no, we're not rich. Oh, we're not. It's just the goalposts keep shifting. And the level keeps on being raised up.

[20 : 52] Some parts of the world, you're rich if you live in a room, a house with two rooms in it, instead of just one. Some places, you're rich if you're on a bicycle, instead of just having to walk. If you've got water in your home, instead of having to go to the well, everything's relative.

It's not about how much money you've got in a bank. It's about what you do with it. It's always a relative term. The goalposts always keep shifting. We can always say, oh, it's not like me because I'm not rich.

It's not about what you've got. It's about what you do with it. Whether you recognize where it all comes from. Being rich, even if you are rich, is not wrong in itself.

But making that your chief goal in life becomes literally self-defeating. Remember what we read at verse 7 there. We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out.

Babies don't come out with bags of gold in their hand, and rich coats. They're naked. They've got nothing at all. We brought nothing into this world. It is certain we can carry nothing out.

[22 : 00] And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. But they that will be rich, those who make it their goal to be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition.

For the love of money is the root of all evil. Not money itself. No, wisdom is defense. Money is defense. It can be a good thing. It's well used. But the love of money is the root of all evil, which while some coveted after, they have erred from their faith and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

And part of the thing with money is, if that's your goal, it's something that will never satisfy, because it will never be enough. It will never, ever be enough.

No matter how rich you are, you always get your eye on, he's richer than me. He's got more than me. He's got a bigger bank account. He's got more assets than I do. I'm going to aim for the next one. You will never, ever have enough, if that is your goal.

But if it's not your goal, if you're just thankful to the Lord for what you have and what he always provides, you'll find you have abundance and more than enough. Way back in the Old Testament, people knew this.

[23 : 14] The wisdom of God told them, the book of Proverbs, chapter 11, verse 24, there is that scattereth, and yet increaseth. And there is that withholdeth more than his meat, but it tendeth to poverty.

And at chapter 13, verse 7, there is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing. And there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches. When was Zacchaeus at his richest?

When he hoarded his money and overcharged people, or when he gave it all away, and when he repaid everything that he had taken by fraud and means. That is the true riches that the Lord gives. Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life. This is what the wealthy are encouraged to do with their wealth.

Now remember, this chapter is not just having a go at rich people. Because if you look at the opening verses of the chapter, then really it's about those who are servants or slaves, you know, don't make out, oh, now that I'm a Christian, I should be jolly well free, and if my master is a Christian, he should be freeing me, but now I've got to have my rights.

[24 : 26] I want to have this. I want to have that. Such a man is proud, knowing nothing but doting about questions and stripes of words, whereof cometh envy. He's got it, and I want it.

Strife. I want to be better than I am. I want to have more than I am. Railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputings of men, of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth.

Supposing that gain is godliness. God really loved me. I'd be richer. If I was a true Christian, surely God would bless me and give me more. Health and wealth. Prosperity gospel, so-called, which is anything but gospel.

This is how the Lord, through Paul to Timothy, says if you've got money, if you've got riches, that's fine. God has blessed you with it, but this is what you should do with it.

Charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded. Don't think they're better than other people just because God has blessed them with more ugly riches. Nor trust in uncertain riches.

[25 : 28] These things don't last. You can't take them with you. But in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy, that they do good. They be rich in good works, ready to distribute.

That is to spread abroad, to give to those of nothing and willing to communicate. Now the distinction, rather than difference, between distribute and communicate.

Distribute suggests giving away completely to others. Communicate implies allowing others to share in your wealth, as it were, to share it with you so that you're kind of communing with them, to communicate, to share your wealth in them, with them so they're sharing in it, as opposed to just giving it out and that's it, distributed, gone.

So there's a distinction, but they amount to similar things. And because they're willing to share this, well, to do good with it, whether to give it out or to bring others in to share it, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come that they may lay hold and tunnel up.

Because that's the last point we want to make here. We think, if we give it away, if we invite others in to share in our wealth, that we are the poorer. We are losing. But what does the Lord say here through this word?

[26 : 45] He says, laying up in store for themselves. They are the ones that benefit here. They are the ones that are actually enriched by it.

They are the ones that are made better. Remember what the Lord says to the church in Smyrna, Revelation 2 and verse 9, I know thy works and tribulation and poverty, but thou art rich.

Now for all their sufferings, for all their difficulties, the church in Smyrna is one of only two, the other is Philadelphia, out of the seven churches, one of only two about which the Lord has nothing bad to say.

All he says here is, I know you're poverty, but really, you're rich. What you're laying up is in store for yourselves. It is you that benefit.

It is you that increase in riches. It is you that are blessed by the doing of these things. The more you're giving, the more you're sharing, the more you're using what the Lord has given you here, the more you're investing over it, in the cause of Christ, and showing your love for Christ by what you do with it, the richer you are getting.

[27 : 55] The more credit is being stacked up, as it were, against your name. Not that it's a means of salvation, but it is what you are building on, the one and only foundation which no man can lay, and that is laid, which is Christ Jesus.

This is the work you are doing with what you've got, with what you've been given. And remember, that's what Jesus said, of course, as well, in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew 6, verse 19.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust are corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust are corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. And cynics, of course, will say, ah, it's just a means of parting you from your wealth. A fool has soon parted from his money.

They just want you to give it all away because they want what you've got. Well, if you honestly believe there's nothing after this life, if you honestly believe that there's never a day of reckoning,

that there's never a God who's going to add up and say, well, this is what you did with what I gave you.

[29 : 07] This is how you behaved with the life that I gave you to live. This is what you did with the resources that I entrusted to your hand. There'll never be an answering. There'll never be a day of reckoning because there is no God.

There is no afterlife. There's no heaven. There's no hell. If you really, you honestly believe that. But that would lead you to live your life a certain way. But I would almost guarantee that at some point along the way, as the end draws near, the fear will set in because the certainty, the deep down realization, that isn't actually the truth.

we know what we believe because we know whom we have believed. We know who has died and risen again.

We know that he has ascended into heaven. We trust and believe that in the heaven that he has ascended to, we know what Christ has done. This is the one in whom we believe. This is the eternal life that we desire to lay hold upon, to lay up for ourselves and store for ourselves a good foundation.

It will be hidden because it is a foundation and it will be hard often because a foundation has to be. It's no use of it soft and squishy and earthy and sandy.

[30 : 26] It has to be hardcore and it will be hidden and it will be hard work. This is not just a word to the rich because who's rich and who's not rich?

It's all in relative time. You're rich compared to some others. You're poor compared to many others perhaps. But none of us can say it doesn't apply to me. I'm not rich. The Lord has made each of us rich in different ways.

It's not about what you've got. It's about what you do with what the Lord has given you. These are the things by which we lay up in store for ourselves.

Blessing. Credit almost, if we can say that. The reward that Scripture does say that will be for those who have used rightly the things the Lord has given them.

Salvation is only of Christ. The reward will be according to what we have built in that foundation.

That's what he writes to the Corinthians. In my Father's house are many mansions.

[31 : 27] If it were not so, I would have told you. Laying up in store for themselves. It's for us that we seek to do it. A good foundation against the time to come that they may lay hold on eternal life.

Let's pray.