

# Decaying Foundations

by Russell DeLong

---

*The sermon emphasizes the urgent need to rebuild the moral and spiritual foundations of society by returning to faith in God and personal responsibility.*

**Scripture:** 2 Chronicles 7:14, Psalm 11:3, Proverbs 14:34, Isaiah 59:2, 1 John 1:9

**Topics:** "Moral Decay", "Spiritual Revival"

---

## Description

Russell DeLong delivers a powerful sermon on the importance of rebuilding the foundations of faith and morality in a society that is facing moral decay and spiritual emptiness. Drawing parallels between the early American pioneers who sought God's guidance and the current state of the nation, he emphasizes the need to return to a personal relationship with God and a belief in His purpose for humanity. DeLong highlights the alarming statistics of declining church attendance, moral standards, and increasing crime rates as indicators of a society in need of spiritual revival and restoration of ethical values.

---

## Transcript

Text -- If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do? (Psalms 11:3).

The text is a very striking and thought-provoking question. If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?

Our present civilization, particularly here in America, was founded upon religion. Roger

Babson, the great statistician, in reporting a conversation he had with the president of one of the South American republics, discovered the reason for the difference in the progress made by the northern continent and that of the southern. The founders of the South American countries, for the most part, were Spaniards who went there for the purpose of discovering gold, while the Puritans and Pilgrims came here for the purpose of finding God. There is the difference of only one letter in the spelling of those two words, "Gold" and "God" but there is an eternity of difference in the meaning of these words.

On September 16, 1620, a band of 102 brave, hardy, determined souls set out from England on the good ship Mayflower to sail through an uncharted sea in search of freedom and religious liberty. There was no sight of land until daybreak of November 16, exactly two months later, when what is now known as Cape Cod came into view and these 102 rugged pioneers stepped out of the Mayflower onto Plymouth Rock and into a new, virgin territory.

The first few months this brave band faced starvation, savage Indians, and a scourge of

what was called "general sickness." Death came to twenty of the twenty-four households, taking a toll of fifty-one, exactly fifty per cent of the original band. Terrible as the suffering had been, heartbreaking as was the bereavement experienced with mounds of the newly dug graves within sight, not one of the Pilgrims returned with the Mayflower when it set sail for England in the spring of 1621. Longfellow has well written:

All strong hearts and true

Not one went back on the "Mayflower."

No, not one looked back

Who has set his hand to this plowing.

Pioneers of true Americanism, they stayed, they conquered, they sowed their seed in the sacred soil of the rights of men and garnered a goodly harvest. [1] Dr. Marsh has well said:

Aye, call it holy ground,

The soil where first they trod,

They left unstained what there they found;

Freedom to worship God. [2]

They laid the foundation for the great American superstructure. It was a solid base. But no matter how good the foundation, if forces are permitted to undermine and bore, sooner or later the entire superstructure will come tumbling down. If the termites are permitted to do their devastating work, eventually the building will crash.

The Psalmist cries out, "If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" Well -- what can they do? Kill the termites and repair the foundations. That is the imperative need today.

Look at conditions:

1. Fifty-eight per cent of the population does not attend church regularly. The National

Opinion Research Center reports that only 69% of Catholics, 39% of the Protestants, and 9% of the Jews attend church once a week.

Dr. Leavell in his book, *The Romance of Evangelism*, gives the following interesting but alarming statistics relative to church members:

5% do not exist.

10% cannot be found.

20% never pray.

25% never read the Bible.

30% never attend church services.

40% never give to any cause.

50% never go to Sunday school.

60% never go to church on Sunday evening.

70% never engage in any church service.

80% never have family worship.

90% never win a soul to Christ.

If the above figures are accurate, it is no wonder that the church is powerless, that moral standards are low, and that crime is high.

2. Crime increased 12.4 per cent in 1945 over 1944. One major offense was committed on the average of every 20.1 seconds. Every day on the average 149 persons were robbed, 662 automobiles stolen, 881 places burglarized and 2,371 other types of theft were committed. An estimation of 1,565,541 major crimes were committed in 1945, an increase of 171,886 over 1944 (Associated Press, March 19, 1946).

In a very recent issue, Life magazine devotes a lead article to the alarming prevalence of crime (April 8, 1946). It contends that "A new crime wave hit America last year." The following startling figures are released relative to young people under 18 years of age:

Since 1939 the number of girls under 18 arrested has increased 198%. Boys arrested under 18 has increased 48% for homicide, 70% for rape, 39% for robbery, 72% for assault, 55% for auto thefts and 101% for drunkenness. Total juvenile delinquency is up just over 100%.

J. Edgar Hoover, F.B.I. Chief, says, "A crime wave is not coming -- it is already here."

So -- what are we going to do about it? There is just one thing to do -- repair the

foundations. Immanuel Kant, one of the greatest philosophers of all time, said, "All morality rests upon three postulates; God, freedom, and immortality." Upon these three sturdy shoulders morality is founded. When these are knocked out or destroyed there is no dynamic by which people are impelled to right action.

Today we have no impelling motive for right action. Mr. Keeler, the inventor of the Keeler polygraph -- lie detecting machine -- after examining thousands of people, concludes that only three per cent of all chain store employees and five per cent of bank employees can be depended upon never to steal. He adds, "Most people are honest only because they are afraid of getting caught." It appears that we are all broken down inside. Moral standards are no longer binding. Why? Because we have taken God out of the universe and with Him His immutable laws have gone. We have denied immortality -- we are to die like animals with nothing either to fear or desire after the grave. And finally, we have made man to be the victim of heredity and environment. His acts are wholly explained by mechanism, endocrinology,

evolutionary surges. In brief, we have denied freedom of the will. And, if a man is not free, if he must pursue a certain course of action, it is unfair and unreasonable to hold him responsible.

God, freedom, and immortality have been relegated to the superstitious past. The result is

that we have no foundation for the establishment of an ethical code, and we have lost any dynamic guaranteeing moral conduct. The foundations have been destroyed. They must be repaired, and that speedily, or the entire structure will crash. We face either a return to metaphysical religion or an accelerated recrudescence of paganism with its attending calamities. We must act at once. Tomorrow will be too late.

Let me propose a new platform embodying thirteen planks. Look at this suggested foundation and plan for a revival of genuine religion. Let us go back and rebuild.

1. Back to the belief in a personal God.
2. Back to the belief that that God has a purpose for this universe.
3. Back to the belief that man is the crowning point of His creation and is not a super-evolved animal, free from personal responsibility for his conduct.
4. Back to the belief that man is sovereign; that his will is more significant in determining his conduct than either his heredity or environment.
5. Back to the belief that a purposeful, personal God would transmit His will for the crowning triumph of His creative genius, man.
6. Back to the belief that this will of God is revealed and recorded in the holy, sacred Book, the Bible.
7. Back to the belief that when man transgresses the law of God, he sins.
8. Back to the belief that an atonement is necessary for this sin.
9. Back to the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and on the Cross of Calvary an atonement was made.
10. Back to the belief that no matter how bound by sinful habits nor how polluted the personality may have become, the blood of Christ can go deeper than the stain of sin has gone.
11. Back to the belief that the Holy Spirit can transform the individual, rejuvenate his spirit, and give him a dynamic that will make him a victor over, and not a victim of, his environment.

12. Back to the belief that in the end right will triumph.

13. Back to the belief that there is an eternal fitness of things in the universe so that the man that does wrong will suffer for his sinful acts while the man who aligns himself on the side of righteousness will be rewarded by the Ruler of a righteous universe.

"If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?" The answer is rebuild!

The restoration of the foundations is not a collective matter although it will take the

combined efforts of millions of persons. It must be a personal commitment of my self to God and His will. Such a movement must start in individual hearts. It will then spread to the community and transform society. But it is only changed men that will change society.

Sin is the barrier between man and God. Our willful acts which have violated God's laws

must be forgiven and our sinful nature must be cleansed by His blood. If you need forgiveness or cleansing look to God just now. If you have wandered away from the religion of your boyhood home and the prayers of your devout mother, return today. In your own life let the foundations be restored. Rebuild in yourself the standards which sin has destroyed. Let Jesus come into your heart. He is the solution of your personal problem and is the only answer to the world's present desperate need.

Jesus is tenderly calling thee home

Calling today, calling today!

Why from the sunshine of love wilt thou roam,

Farther and farther away?

Calling today; calling today;

Jesus is calling,

Is tenderly calling today!

Jesus is standing silhouetted on the horizon of the world's need, calling. But He is also

knocking at your heart's door. As He enters your heart and millions of others, the long looked-for and much prayed-for revival will be here.

Jesus is pleading; Oh, list to His voice

Hear Him today, hear Him today!

They who believe on His name shall rejoice;

Quickly arise and away.

Let us pray.

Prayer

O Jesus, Thou Son of God, Thou art towering over the wrecks of humanity like a great beacon light against a dark sky, calling the nations to repentance. Thou art offering peace, rest, and happiness. We have forgotten God and have well-nigh destroyed the foundations. Help us to stop and begin to repair the inroads made by our sinfulness. We pray that church members by the thousands may come back to Thee in sincere repentance. Thou art calling. Help many to answer Thee. Thou canst speak peace. Thou canst liberate souls from the fetters of sin. Thou canst cleanse the innermost being. Come, in forgiving pardon and in cleansing power this very hour to hundreds if not thousands of hearts all over America and around the world. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

\* \* \* \* \*

#### ENDNOTES

1 Daniel L. Marsh, "The American Canon."

2 Ibid.

---

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/russell-delong/decaying-foundations/>

# *Grow in Your Walk with Christ*

---

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

**[www.sermonindex.net](http://www.sermonindex.net)**