



"One may be a hero in God's sight and yet never hear a hurrah from any human lips."

—J.R. Miller

15-Oct-21

'Before the Foundation of the World' (Part Two)

In [Ephesians 2:20](#), the apostle Paul writes that God's chosen people, the Body of Christ, have been built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. Most of us are not ministers or deacons or occupy some position in the church, but we are all important to [God](#). In [I Corinthians 12:12-14](#), the same apostle affirms:

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit, we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many.

He confirms in verse 18, "But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body, just as He pleased." In verse 27, he assures us, "Now you are the body of Christ, and members individually."

From the least of us to the greatest, we all have a part to play in the construction of the church. The apostles and the prophets laid its foundation, but we are fellow workers building the edifice. Paul advises in [I](#)

[Thessalonians 5:11](#), "Therefore comfort each other and edify one another"—building each other up is one of our jobs!

[I Corinthians 3:15](#) states, "If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss, but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire." God wants to save us—and He will save us—but salvation and eternal life means living the kind of lives that He and [Jesus Christ](#) do. If we fall short, what kind of experiences will He have to run us through to impress His character on us?

We can at least derive comfort from the fact that if we die with God's Spirit, He will give us life. We do not deserve it, but His power, reputation, and [faithfulness](#) are at stake. God has plans, and He is not planning to fail. Just as [Moses](#) said, He did not deliver us from spiritual Egypt to destroy us in the wilderness! We will be in God's Family because He wants us there!

We cannot claim any inherent superiority. It was God's choice, not anything that we have done to earn His grace. We all know the story of Esau and Jacob. Paul retells part of it to make this point:

. . . when Rebekah also had conceived by one man, even by our father [Isaac](#) (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, "The older shall serve the younger." As it is written, "Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated." ([Romans 9:10-13](#))

It was God's predetermined decision to choose Jacob. He does the same with us. This does not mean that we have no part to play in our calling. In [Ephesians 4:15-16](#), Paul writes:

. . . but, speaking the truth in [love](#), [we] may grow up in all things into Him who is the Head—Christ—from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Again, we see our responsibility to grow up into the image of Christ and to build up His Body.

In a June 1996 *Forerunner* Personal, "Little Things Count," John Ritenbaugh exhorts:

Brethren, never think that what you do is meaningless! You occupy a position in the most important organization on earth, and what you are doing is preparing you to affect the lives of BILLIONS in time to come. Little things, like you and me, count because God has graciously inserted Himself into our lives. Our lives do make a difference.

Our salvation requires effort, a cooperative effort ([Philippians 2:12-13](#)). We have the very life of God in us, and we will be saved because of the work of God and Christ, along with our faithful obedience and submission. [Hebrews 3:6](#) from the *Contemporary English Version* (CEV) reads, "But Christ is the Son in charge of God's people. And we are those people, if we keep on being brave and don't lose hope."

We cannot be careless. Our calling is a responsibility and an obligation to be strong, remain faithful, and persevere. While Scripture contains a myriad of encouraging verses, many others serve as warnings against distraction or neglect.

We must work on maintaining a healthy, vibrant relationship with our Savior. It is more than just an intellectual acceptance that Jesus died because of our sins, and we accept Him as our Savior. It is a genuine commitment to Him, responding in love and gratitude for what He has done. It may not be possible for us to comprehend how devoted God is to us or how much love He has for us, but we need to honor His devotion and reciprocate it right back to Him.

In [Matthew 24:13](#), Jesus tells us that if we endure to the end, we shall be saved. Paul takes this a step further, writing in [II Timothy 2:12](#), "If we endure, we shall also reign with Him," but he sternly warns us in the same verse that, if we deny our Savior, "He also will deny us."

[Daniel 4:35](#) (CEV) instructs us, "To him the nations are far less than nothing; God controls the stars in the sky and everyone on this earth. When God does

something, we cannot change it . . ." He is sovereign over all things in the universe, so if God purposes to do something—like transform our character to give us eternal life in His Kingdom—He will do it! No one can stop Him!

In the first chapter of II Peter, the apostle tells us to behave like Christ as we grow in applying what He has taught us. In verses 10-11, he urges us,

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things, you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

If we hold fast, we will be in the [Kingdom of God](#). We will be there when Jesus Christ rewards His saints: "Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'" ([Matthew 25:34](#)).

- John Reiss

From the Archives: Featured Sermon

[Will You Be Accounted Worthy for the Kingdom?](#)

by John O. Reid

Like businessmen reviewing plans, making forecasts, and anticipating accountability, God expects us to define and follow through on spiritual objectives. Accountability has both a negative and a positive aspect. We need to know what we will be accountable for. Our job is to fight our human nature, understanding that without God's help, we are doomed to failure. With this spiritual help, we must bring our human nature under subjection, making our salvation operational by incrementally taking on the nature of God. He will not give up on us if we don't give up on ourselves.

From the Archives: Featured Article

Little Things Count!

by John W. Ritenbaugh

When we look at ourselves against the backdrop of humanity, we can feel that we do not matter. We are just a number among billions. Yet, no one and no act is truly insignificant because of two natural principles: the natural tendency is to increase, and we reap what we sow. John Ritenbaugh shows that, concerning sin and righteousness, these principles play major roles in our personal lives and in the Body of Christ.

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