Title: When Foundations Are Shaken

Introduction:
I. Illustration: Alexander Campbell (1788-1866) – Presbyterian who was influenced by the truth to leave everything behind – to be baptized for the remission of sins after thinking that he was a Christian for years.

II. There is a quantitative difference between sharpening one’s understanding of the Bible and having the “foundation” of one’s religious life shaken and cracked.
   A. Honest Bible students are constantly refining their understanding of God’s word as they study. With time, those “changes” are probably fairly small.
   B. Such changes are often not hard to accept because they don’t cause any significance differences in practice.

III. We will be studying this morning about a man whose religious life was shaken at the foundation by the realization that he was wrong about some very basic matters.

Body:
I. From Persecutor To Preacher
   A. Saul of Tarsus was a vehement persecutor of the early Christians.
      1. Acts 8:1-3
      3. Galatians 1:13-14
      5. Acts 26:8-11
   B. Saul was presented with evidence that Jesus had indeed been raised.
      1. Jesus appeared to him on the road to Damascus (Acts 9:4-6).
      2. Jesus didn’t tell Saul what he had to do to be saved, but He confirmed the message of the disciples, i.e., Jesus is the Son of God, risen from the dead.
      3. The very message which Saul had so strenuously opposed, he now saw to be the truth (Acts 9:9).
      4. The whole foundation of his religious life had been shaken and cracked.
   C. Saul’s reaction
      2. Saul’s actions meant that everything he had been doing in persecuting the church was wrong.
      3. He had thought himself acceptable to God; now he knew that he was a terrible sinner (1 Timothy 1:12-16).

II. Why Not Change?
   A. Many people today find themselves in situations similar to those of Saul.
      1. They learn the truth and realize that they have not been following the right path.
2. They discover that, although they believed themselves to be Christians, they are not acceptable to God.
3. The “foundation” of their religious life is shaken and cracked.
4. Like Saul of Tarsus, these individuals have come to a fork in the road and have a difficult decision to make.

B. Not all of them, however, respond in the same way that Saul did!
1. Some turn away from the truth; “If I don’t think about it, it doesn’t bother me.”
2. Some adopt the “buffet style” of Bible study; they only listen to the passages which they like.
3. Some stubbornly continue to argue to justify themselves.
   a. Like the lawyer of Luke 10, they know the truth already, but they want to justify themselves.
   b. It almost seems that they believe that they don’t admit the truth, it is still in question.
   c. The truth is still the truth even if no one believes it!

C. The common element is usually that people don’t want to change.
1. In many cases, the change would be a big one! A change in churches, change in worship, change in daily life, etc.
2. Often such changes have implications for personal relationships.
   a. “If I accept this view of things, my parents (fill in family relationship) were, in fact, lost. I can’t accept that.”
   b. “If I accept this view of things, I will lose many close friendships with people who will continue to think the way I currently do.”

III. The Crux of the Matter
A. Jesus told a parable about different kinds of soils (Luke 8).
1. Jesus explained that the wayside soil represents those who hear, but the message finds no place in their hearts and so the devil comes and takes it away (vs. 12).
2. As in other matters, if we continue to ignore the “voice” of our conscience, at some point we silence it altogether.

B. The real issue is whether we want to have a relationship with God as defined by truth.
2. Do I value my family relationships more than I do my relationship with God?
3. Do I value my relationships with friends more than I do my relationship with God?

C. How we handle truth is a very important thing.
1. If we do not love truth, God will even help us to believe the lie (2 Thessalonians 2:10-11).
2. It is not just non-Christians who must do an “honesty check” of how they respond to truth.
3. Just because we have obeyed the gospel doesn’t mean that at some other point down the road we will not turn our faces away from the truth because of the change we see as necessary.

Conclusion:

I. Saul discovered that his religious life was 180 degrees out of phase!
   A. There is no doubt that he lost friends and prestige – perhaps was even alienated from his extended family (Philippians 3:7-8).
   B. He had to admit that what he had been doing was wrong!
   C. The desire to please God was so strong in Saul that he made the change with a whole heart.

II. What is our attitude toward the changes demanded in us by the truth?

Invitation:

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