

How Firm a Foundation

John Rippon's Selection (attrib. 'K') · 1787 · Tune: Foundation (Traditional American melody)

Meter: 11.11.11.11

Verse 1

How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in His excellent Word!
What more can He say than to you He hath said,
To you, who for refuge to Jesus have fled?

Verse 2

'Fear not, I am with thee, O be not dismayed,
For I am thy God, and will still give thee aid;
I'll strengthen thee, help thee, and cause thee to stand,
Upheld by My righteous, omnipotent hand.'

Verse 3

'When through the deep waters I call thee to go,
The rivers of sorrow shall not overflow;
For I will be with thee, thy troubles to bless,
And sanctify to thee thy deepest distress.'

Verse 4

'When through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie,
My grace, all sufficient, shall be thy supply;
The flame shall not hurt thee; I only design
Thy dross to consume, and thy gold to refine.'

Verse 5

'The soul that on Jesus hath leaned for repose,
I will not, I will not desert to his foes;
That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake,
I'll never, no never, no never forsake.'

History

Published in 1787 in 'A Selection of Hymns' by London Baptist pastor John Rippon, signed only with the letter 'K' (likely Robert Keene, Rippon's precentor). Each verse paraphrases a different Scripture promise. The American folk tune 'Foundation' first appeared in Joseph Funk's *Genuine Church Music* (1832). It was a favorite of Andrew Jackson, Robert E. Lee, and Theodore Roosevelt.

Scripture References (KJV)

Isaiah 41:10

Fear thou not; for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness.

Isaiah 43:2

When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

Hebrews 13:5

Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

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