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Building a Life that Lasts Forever; Matthew 7:24-29  
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Introduction – I began preaching through the Sermon on the Mount on August 26, 2018. It only took me 6 months! What a rich study and journey this has been for us to walk through this great sermon preached by our Lord. The message could not be any clearer. False faith will fail you. It will desperately fail to sustain you in this life, and it will miserably fail you in the next life. False faith is so focused on this life that it misses real life. It's so focused on self that it misses God. It's so focused on earning salvation and boasting in self that it misses salvation by grace and boasting in Christ! It's religion without relationship; it doesn't know God as Father. It's moralism without transformation; it doesn't know a new heart and a new life. It professes to have it all, but in the end loses it all. That's exactly where Jesus brings His sermon to a conclusion.

This is the third and final word picture that Jesus draws to bring home the point of His message. The wide gate corresponds to the diseased tree which corresponds to the foolish man. The narrow gate corresponds to the healthy tree which corresponds to the wise man. There are two ways to build your life. One will leave you in ruin, now and forever. One will lead you to life, now and forever.

- I. It Begins with Hearing the Words of Christ
  - a. "Everyone then" Let's take note of how this closing section connects with what Jesus has just said. Vv22-23.
    - i. The most dreaded, tragic, fearful words of all are the words from the Lord, "I never knew you, depart from me." That's fearful and that's final! You don't come back from that. You don't get a redo. It is appointed to man once to die and then the judgment.
    - ii. If you don't want to hear those dreaded words spoken over your life, then...then.
  - b. And He says "everyone." The invitation is extended to everyone! Even the Pharisee that Jesus described throughout the entire sermon who is the superb example of false faith. Even he is compelled to repent and believe! Nicodemus did in John's gospel, and he was a

Pharisee! The word goes out to everyone here today. You can avoid ruin and have life!

- c. It begins with hearing the words of Christ. Christ has spoken clearly. He has beautifully demonstrated and articulated and described the difference between false faith and true faith. Have you heard Him? We've been listening to Him for 6 months. Have you heard Him? Are we among the number of false faith or are we among those who truly believe?
  - d. Have we really heard the words of Christ? Have we taken His words as words of truth and words of warning and words of life? Have we taken them to heart? Have we truly evaluated our lives according to the words of Christ?
  - e. Paul says in Romans 10:17, "So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the words of Christ."
- II. It Continues with Heeding the Words of Christ
- a. You see if we have truly heard and truly believed, true faith is put into practice. True faith shows itself. There are no closet Christians. When your heart is changed, your life changes. Your speech changes. Your conduct changes. Your attitude changes. Your love for God expresses itself. Your love for others expresses itself.
  - b. You know you can't save yourself, you know you need Christ. You know you can't live for Christ on your own, you know you need the grace of the Father. If you really hear Jesus, you begin to follow Jesus.
  - c. When you read through the Beatitudes, you desire for God to make you look that way. When you read the salt and light passages, you pray for your life to be that way. When you read the law of God, you want to honor and glorify Him through your behavior. When you worship God, you express your love and devotion to Him because He so loves and is devoted to you. When you read the do nots, you pray to shed your life of those things that entangle and strangle your faith. When you read the dos, those become your pattern.
  - d. And when you hear Jesus say, "enter the narrow gate that leads to life" you forsake the popular way with all its frills and comforts for the hard path of knowing the greatest treasure of all!

### III. A Life Built on Christ Survives the Storms

- a. The “rock” here of course is Christ. Our foundation must be Christ. No other foundation will do. No other foundation will hold. It is Christ. He alone can truly save and forgive and take away our sins. He alone reconciles us to the Father and opens the way for us to be adopted into the family of God. He alone sustains our faith through this life. He alone ushers us into the presence of God now, and at death’s door, and through the gates of paradise.
- b. What are these rains and floods and winds?
  - i. They are the rains of personal suffering and hardship. Rainy days are often miserable, difficult days. And in this life, we will have miserable, difficult days. As Job said, who knew more than any of us, “Life is short and full of trouble.”
    1. In this life storms will come. Storms of sickness and disease. Storms of losing loved ones. Storms of tragedy and unforeseen hardship. Loss of employment. Loss of income. Failed plans and dreams. Life will not always be easy. The rains will come.
    2. Acts 14:22 says, “through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God.” That’s why Jesus said the way of the narrow gate is hard.
  - ii. There are the floods of adversity. Tsunami floods that roll in suddenly and sweep things away. People will disagree with you. Oppose you. Disregard you. Despise you. Say all manner of evil against you. Hate you and even harm you. Persecution will come as a flood at some point, in some way, if you believe in Christ and live for the glory of God.
    1. As followers of Christ, we simply won’t fit in this world, and the world around us will react and sometimes react violently. They will unfriend you. Accuse you. Seek to undermine and discredit you.
    2. Jesus warned us didn’t He? If the world hated Him and eventually hung Him on a tree, they will in some way turn on us as well.
    3. 2 Tim 3:12, “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” That’s why Jesus said the way to life is a narrow gate.

- iii. Then there are those hurricane force winds of our adversary. My how he rages and blows against us. He seeks to pummel us with thoughts of doubt and discouragement. He seeks to paralyze us with fear and distrust of our Father. He sends those winds of temptation to sin and winds of distraction to lesser things so that just like Peter walking on the water, we would take our eyes off Jesus and sink!
  - 1. He will huff and he will puff, but if our life is built on Christ, he will not knock our life down! We are in the shelter of the Almighty, unmoved in His sovereign, omnipotent hands. Secure in His promise to save every last soul that clings to Him!
  - 2. Oh we may stumble, we may fall, but in Christ and by His grace alone, we will not fail!

#### IV. A Life Apart from Christ Crumbles

- a. Notice the similarities between the wise and foolish man. They both heard the words of Christ. They both built houses. And they both experienced the storms of life.
- b. But note the differences. One heeded the words of Christ, the other did not. One built his life on Christ, one did not. One's life endured the storms, one did not. One life did not fall, the other fell and fell to a great degree. The difference is Christ!
- c. Life is not life without Christ. And eternal life is gained only in Christ.

Conclusion – Notice what Matthew purposefully leaves unsaid in vv28-29. Oh they were amazed at His teaching! They had never heard anything like this from anyone like Him. The crowds were astonished, but Jesus didn't preach to astonish them. He preached to change them. Great sermon Jesus! You really stepped on some toes today Jesus. But there was no faith, no repentance, no obedience, no change of heart and life. Sand! Sand!

Gospel sermons, Bible sermons, Jesus sermons are not meant to astonish, they are meant to woo and compel and convict and awaken people out of false faith into faith and repentance and life and salvation in Christ! They are not meant to merely raise the emotions; they are meant to impart life and awaken the soul! It's not enough to be impressed; we must be changed!