

Matthew 7:24-29 (NKJV)

24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

26 But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

28 And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching,

29 for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

Remember last week we talked about life being the process of building our houses, or actually, our lives. And we either build it based upon **God's word** or we build it based upon **something else**, something that becomes **more important** to us than what God says.

We looked at both the builders and the houses.

We looked at the similarities and the differences.

We are going to look at these some more as we near our conclusion of our study on the Sermon on the Mount.

I don't know about you but I feel like now I am ready to go back and **really** preach the sermon on the mount. I feel like we have not **delved its depths** as much as we have **laid a solid ground work to begin** to.

I hope we all find time this week to re-read those three chapters to recall what we have learned.

So back to our text.

Ok we have men in **similar circumstances** doing **similar things** with **similar restrictions** and **demands** in a **similar world** with **similar rules of nature**.

God does not remove one man and place him in a completely different environment. No they are both facing the same limitations and demands.

And look. They build houses. Both of them do it. And you cannot tell them apart.

We need to consider something here. Jesus is limiting who he is talking to.

Think about it. The life of a Hugh Hefner or Madona looks nothing like the life of a Billy Graham or RC Sproul. Those houses do not look similar at all.

Anyone could tell at a glance the difference of those two houses.

Jesus was limiting this to people who live **similar lives** for **different reasons**. Remember that since verse 15 Jesus has been warning us about the **tricky** things. He has been warning about **deceptive** things. He has been warning us about things that **look one way** but are **completely different**.

These houses both **look** like Christian houses. These lives both **look** like Christian lives. These people are doing many of the same things. These are probably, in our environment, people who **go to church**, even a **good** church. They know scripture. They listen to good speakers. They may tithe their money. They may like Christian music. So we look at them and they look like to **me** like **me**. A surface encounter will probably not reveal them.

We need to open the door to the house. And even in a cursory look, it may still look exactly the same. There are certainly more similarities than differences. But at some point we need to look at the foundation.

What is the foundation on which **this person** makes his or her decisions? That reveals everything that matters. What the foundation is, is way more important than what the house looks like.

I know people, especially people who come to Christ later in life, whose house doesn't look very Christian. They have not yet learned the Christian code of conduct. They have not yet learned to keep quiet about stuff Christians think is wrong. They cuss. They are honest about stuff that most Christians keep private. They don't yet know how to dress or act like a Christian. But as they reveal what they are thinking, you find Jesus at the core.

They exhibit a **heart-felt appreciation** for the salvation that Christ has given to them. They recognize that they could not have ever **deserved** this salvation. In fact they have **deep shame** for their sin. They may not want to talk about it, but it is an awareness they cannot escape. They are aware of current sin as well. And they are dealing with it by faith.

They are now more tentative about their own decisions. They used to think they **knew how** to build a life on their own. They may have spent years doing it **their way**. And there was no foundation. They may have been very confident they **knew what they were doing**. But that confidence went away. It was swept away by the mourning they did for their past lives. Now they are asking questions. They are building questions. Now they are asking, how am I really supposed to handle this marriage I am in? How can I do this to please Christ? How can I do this to make Christ happy? And miracle of miracles, when they find out what Christ wants, they begin to actually do it. Instead of learning to **hide** their failures, they **expose them** to people who can help them because pleasing Christ has become more important to them than protecting their image.

Their lives become more and more about this new found faith in Christ and less and less about the old building strategy. What **they** look like begins to not matter nearly as much as what **Christ** looks like.

Paul describes what the foundational life looks like.

Colossians 2:6-7 (NKJV)

6 As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

He is urging his listeners to **walk in Christ** consistent with how you **received Christ**, the same way. We live in Christ the same way we came to Christ, by faith in Him. And we are being built up in Him by faith in His Word.

Acts 20:32 (NKJV)

32 So now, brethren, I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and give you an inheritance among all those who are sanctified.

We see it again. The **foundation** of our lives is **faith in Christ** to the degree that we believe what He says and we obey what He commands. That is the very core. Someone can build a life that **looks** like a Christian without that core. But it is not Christian. When we find ourselves making decisions primarily because we want to look to others like a Christian we are in great great danger. That is never the core of a Christian's life. That is never the method we are to build with.

The core is **God's word**. The core is **our relationship with Christ**. The core is doing right things for the right reasons.

Let's look at a passage I often refer to.

Romans 12:1-2 (NKJV)

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

This is describing the right foundation. It consists of an attitude of surrender to the authority that God has over us. It is seeing all of life from a YES LORD position. It does not have carve outs for our **self rule**. It sees all of our lives under God's **right of control**. Then it gets down to business. It gets down to the nitty gritty of our lives where the rubber really meets the road. It gets

down to sanctification 101. It takes every thought and runs it through the sieve of what God says. Then, as we incorporate God's words in place of our natural thoughts, we are building our lives the way we should. And the more we do that, the better we get at it. And that just continues a cycle of growth in the Christian life.

Many times we cannot determine these things about people in surface conversations in social settings. I find this kind of disclosure happens mostly **one on one** in **very serious conversations**. It often comes out when we talk about our failures or our struggles. It comes out when we are genuinely excited and enthused about things. It happens when God answers prayers and we need to tell someone. It happens when we find encouragement that just really spurs us on. I cannot describe it but it rings of genuineness. You can often tell you are seeing the core of who that person is in those conversations. You get a glimpse of the foundation. What a person does is very important. But why they do it is even more important when you are looking for the foundation.

And it all comes down to the question, why do you do what you do? Trace it back. Does it ultimately come back to your relationship with Christ. That is **building on the rock**. Does it come back to **something else**. That is **sand**. The builder of the house on the sand may like the idea of God. And he may like the idea of receiving God's blessings. But that is his predominant interest in God. Self. So he may curb some things if he thinks he will gain some kind of blessing. But there is no life surrender at the very heart of who that person is. So they pick and chose Christian things and Christian behaviors. But Jesus is never Lord.

There is so much theology out there that is clearly coming from that kind of mindset. They postulate that God is a God of love so God cannot do anything to hurt a human, no matter what state that human is in. They emphasize the grace of God in such a way it overrules the justice of God. Essentially they read scripture in a way that allows them to recreate Jesus in their own image. So they end up with an **idolatrous doctrine** that uses a whole lot of **our words**, enough to fool the lazy minded Christian. But the doctrines, while they hold out salvation by grace and love, the **doctrines themselves** do not **submit** to God's sovereign rule, and the hearts of those who perpetrate those doctrines are often revealed in the process. Not always. But often.

Now are you looking at yourself and asking, which am I? Am I a wise builder or a foolish builder?

Well let's start with this question. Are you welcoming into your heart these sermons on the sermon on the mount. Or more importantly, are you loving

the **sermon on the mount** as it **really reveals itself**. Are you saying, Lord, this has unveiled bad things about me. But thank you. I need to see it. I want to see it. So I can change to please you. Lord I am afraid of some of these things. I am afraid I cannot change them. Please help me. I am committed to making these changes but I cannot do it without your help.

Are you welcoming the wonderful things Jesus is teaching us about the Kingdom of God and the glorious opportunities we have in life to please Him. Or are you feeling- "**make it stop**. I cannot bear with such a demanding view of God. Surely He should like me a little better just as I am. I don't think the sermon on the mount really means exactly what it says. I prefer a different take on it. A gentler Jesus. A more loving Jesus who just accepts people and saves them all no matter what."

There are a lot of false builders who know and quote the sermon on the mount a lot. But they do not quote it the way Jesus intended it. They do not love it.

A second test is, what **difference** has the sermon on the mount made in our lives. Have we thought about its **implications** in our lives. For example where have you applied doing unto others as you would have them do unto you? Certainly we have all had opportunities to do this. Have we gone right back to protecting ourselves and pitying ourselves, etc etc instead of trying to apply what Christ said.

Carla was reading some fiction and in it this man came to Christ. His marriage was going horribly and was about to end. This man determined that every day he would ask his wife what he could do to make her life better. After a short period of him doing this he broke through to his wife and their marriage changed.

A very successful method in marriage counselling is actually applying this simple command of Christ's. So many times we develop habits of protecting ourselves from the ways our spouse hurts us. After a while those patterns get so deep we do not know how to change them. We each think we are being smart and we are responding the only way we know how to. We think we are being smart. Well to change that **each day each party** begins to commits to doing **one thing** that they do **only** to benefit the other partner with no hope of reward. And they tell that partner what it is.

This changes the patterns and that changes the marriage.

I say all this to say that this sermon on the mount is really life changing stuff. So are we putting it in place? The foolish builder would not do such a thing.

A third test could be, how do you handle truth of your shortcomings in your life, no matter who presents them? The foolish builder does not have time for instruction or criticism. He is in a hurry to build his own way and if someone does not like that he did not dig down to the rock, well tough.

But the wise builder **wants to know**. He wants to know where he is not reaching the rock. He welcomes truth from any source. The **truth** is always more important to him than the **means by which it reaches him**. If the building inspector who normally has ridiculous demands comes in and says you missed reaching the rock here, the wise builder says thank you. I will change because of it.

Are we truly submitted to the truth of Christ, the truth of the foundation, no matter how it reaches us. A wise builder welcomes truth.

Now what about the **tests** to the **house**? The rain, the floods and the wind. What are they to mean? And when do they happen?

Scripture uses these illustrations for both current trials and the final judgment. The **ultimate** is final judgment. Remember in context how the **wide way** leads to a person's **destruction**. Jesus will send the Lord Lord sayers to their **final destination** when saying I never knew you. And here the house falls to **complete ruin**.

So we know that it at least appeals to the pressures of final judgment. In fact in prior sermons I have mixed the application of these tests as both in life and at the final judgment. But I am most sure about it applying to final judgment. Now what does it mean, rain, floods and wind?

Our brother Jones believes that it consists of rain being the common calamities and testings of this life. Things like illness, disappointments, stuff going wrong, etc.

He thinks that the floods are the pressures of the world that surround us and try to conform us to the world. Sometimes it is persecution. Sometimes it is environmental pressure by other people. Sometimes it is the allure that the world offers.

And he thinks the wind are direct attempts of the devil. While we are warned of all of these things in scripture, and we must certainly withstand these pressures, I don't think that we can be terribly clear on this.

The big question to me though, is when can the Christian life stand and the non Christian life that looks like a Christian life fall? Does this only happen at the final judgment?

Again the ultimate and most important test is at the final judgment.

But I want to read you some quotes this morning from people who were clearly people who confessed Christ yet now have something different to say. These people are part of a Deconstruction movement who are trying to encourage people to leave true Christianity.

Josh Harris who wrote I kissed dating goodbye-

I have undergone a massive shift in regard to my faith in Jesus. By all the measurements that I have for defining a Christian, I am not a Christian. Many people tell me that there is a different way to practice faith and I want to remain open to this, but I'm not there now."

Marty Sampson who was a Hillsong worship leader

"I'm genuinely losing my faith, and it doesn't bother me. Like, what bothers me now is nothing. I am so happy now, so at peace with the world. It's crazy."

Abraham Piper- John Piper's son

Now posts videos like *"Why Life Would Be Pointless if there Was Ultimate Meaning"*, *"What I Replace Christianity With"*

Paul Maxwell who wrote for Desiring God- John Piper's organization

He says: *I love you guys and I love all the friendships and support I've built here. And I think it's important to say that I'm just not a Christian anymore, and it feels really good. I'm really happy."*

I read these so we get the idea that Jesus knew what He was talking about. I believe that some of our young people may have actually gone to Josh Harris's church. He was telling the truth. He had good doctrine. He looked like an exemplary Christian.

I don't know what rain and floods and winds he encountered. But his house fell. And it did not wait for judgment day.

And this could happen to any of our favorite preachers. Now I may not be your favorite preacher, but I am certainly the one you are in contact with the most. What would you do if **I** turned my back on Christ tomorrow? What would you do if **my house** was proven not to be on the rock. I hope you would **be surprised**. But would you allow it to shake your foundation? You should not. Any human is capable of any thing. Any house can fail to reach the rock. None of us can allow ourselves to rely upon another to the place that if **they fall we fall**. Some of us older folks have lost people from our church that we thought were true but turned out not to be. That can never be a game changer for us.

That is why it is so important that we are anchored on God's word and have a real day to day relationship with Christ. It is important that our lies in our minds are being replaced with truth daily. It is important that we are feeding

ourselves in God's word regularly and not depending upon someone else to give it to us.

Scripture assures us that a believer is going to have trouble from the world, the flesh and the devil. We will face **rain** and **floods** and **winds** far before we reach our end.

It is important to understand that a solid foundation in Christ does more than get us through **final judgment**. While that is the **most important thing**, it is very important we reach final judgment with our faith intact.

All of us know that we all suffer various trials and tests. Like Sarah says, We all suffer. We could all give examples. And they have all happened exactly as God has determined. And they have all been used for our good if we are in Christ. But it is absolutely vital that we are building upon the right foundation in our **day to day** practice of building a life. If we are not, the trials reveal that. Trials show us what we **really** believe, what we are **really** living for, what we **really** think about God. It reveals the lies that we have not yet done business with in our lives, due to ignorance or stubbornness. The solid foundation built by believing and practicing the word of God will withstand the tests. The tests cannot knock that house over. But the tests **will reveal** where we have **not quite hit** the foundation in areas of our lives.

The point is that we really must walk worthy of Christ every day, all the time. We cannot hope to live with just enough belief to make it through judgment. That may not be enough belief to even make it **TO** judgment. Our houses could fall before then.

Paul was well aware of this when he said this in Colossians.

Colossians 1:9-14 (NKJV)

⁹ For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;

¹⁰ that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing *Him*, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

¹¹ strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy;

¹² giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light.

¹³ He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed *us* into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

¹⁴ in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins.

Notice it again. Paul prays that his people would be filled with the **knowledge of His will** SO THAT they may **walk worthy of the Lord**. SO THAT they may be **doers** of His will. This is good house building.

This is what we are called to.

The storms are coming. Build your house well.

We have a week in front of us where we are called to do so.

I believe we will finish the sermon on the mount next week.