

**Sonoraville Baptist Church**  
**Sunday, June 20, 2010 – 11:00 AM**  
**Rev. Steve Skates, Pastor**

**Building a Life that Lasts – Matthew 7:24-27**

**Introduction:** Here is a little trivia test - Bonnano Pisano is A) A Dancer with the Russian Ballet; B) An Italian Architect; C) A Character in the Lion King; or D) A Spanish Dessert? If you guessed “B” you would be correct.

In 1174, Pisano designed a free standing eight-story bell tower for the Cathedral of the city of Pisa. But soon after the building of the 185 foot tower had begun, it was discovered that soil was much softer than the builders had anticipated. The foundation was just not stable enough to support a structure of this size!

And sure enough, before long it began to tilt... and it continues to tilt. They’ve tried to shore up the foundation. They’ve tried to build the upper levels at an angle to make the top of the tower look straight, but nothing could make the Tower straight again.

The Leaning Tower of Pisa is an architectural marvel because it has stood for over 800 years but one day, all the experts say it will fall because it wasn’t built on the right foundation.

Now, let’s contrast that with another architectural marvel - The Golden Gate Bridge. Designed by an engineer and poet named Joseph Strauss and built between 1933 and 1937, the Golden Gate Bridge became both the answer to the Bay area’s transportation problems and the catalyst for its economic growth.

But did you know that the Golden Gate Bridge is built near the San Andreas Fault? During an earthquake, the bridge is built to sway some twenty feet at the center of its one-mile span.

The secret to the bridge’s durability lies in more than just its flexibility. By design, every part of the bridge is integrated, from one welded joint to the other up through the cable system to two great towers and piers. The towers, which bear most of the weight, are deeply embedded in the rock foundation beneath the sea. The Golden Gate Bridge stands today because of its solid foundation.

Our lives are an even greater engineering marvel than the Golden Gate Bridge. Just take the human body for example. There are millions of light sensitive nerve cells in the back of each human eye, relaying information to our brain through a bundle of nerve fibers that form the optic nerve. All this happens in just a fraction of a second, and “*wallah*,” we can see!

We have approximately 60,000 miles of blood vessels inside our bodies; nearly enough to stretch 2½ times around the earth.

We have about 5 million hairs on our bodies and about 100,000 on our heads, and God has counted every one of them.

We have about one trillion cells inside our bodies, and about 50 miles of nerves snaking through our body like phone wires relaying messages to our body, spinal cord and brain.

But even more than that, **Gen. 1:27 (NIV)** tells us that “*God created man in his own image.*” The Psalmist praised God in **Psalms 139:14 (NIV)** because he knew he was “*fearfully and wonderfully made.*” And over in **Eph. 2:10 (NIV)** Paul tells us, “*For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.*”

So, as intricate and wonderfully constructed as human life is, it is amazing how we treat it – as though it was something to throw away when it’s an inconvenience, or discard as useless when it gets older. And even more amazing is how we deem our lives as so trivial and something to be taken for granted.

Here is what I mean. We want everything in a hurry. I’ve seen people stand in front of a microwave and complain that it takes a full minute to heat up a cup of coffee, or gripe because they can’t instantly connect with someone across the country on their cell phone! I mean, we have all these modern conveniences – miracles of technology at our very fingertips, but never have so many complained of having so little time to enjoy life.

We’ve sacrificed quality for convenience. We say we don’t have time. We say we can’t wait. And we’re sacrificing enduring truth for quick fixes.

But if we want to ensure that we can have a life that can weather life’s’ greatest storms no matter how strong the winds or heavy the rains, we need to step out of the quicksand of convenience and step onto the bedrock of lasting truth.

Storms are an inevitable part of life. Either you've been through some, or going through one right now, or one is headed your way. They are a reality, and the temptation is to jump to a quick-fix solution. But before you act, let me show you how you can build a life that lasts—a life built on a solid foundation.

Jesus, the man was a carpenter who knew how to build things. But Jesus, the God-man is the builder of mankind. When man was created, God looked at both Jesus and His Holy Spirit and said, "*Let us make man in our image, in our likeness...*" **Genesis 1:26 (NIV)**. So Jesus knows how to build a life, and He shows us how to build a solid foundation for our lives.

At the end of the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 7, Jesus talked about a man who built his house on rock and another who built on sand. In this story, Jesus gives us three basic foundations for building a life that will last. Before we read it, I want to talk about the importance focusing on the basics.

The basics are important because Jesus focused on the fundamentals of faith. His teaching was so profound, it set the religious establishment of His day on edge, yet the faith that Jesus taught was so simple that a child could understand it. It's time that we all got back to the basics of faith.

John Wooden is a man who practiced the basics. Wooden died a couple of weeks ago at the age of 99. He was a great builder of basketball players and teams who led the UCLA basketball team to championship after championship back in the 60's and 70's.

He was an old-school coach. The techniques he used were considered even by the players in his day rather unusual. But he was a winner because to Him, the game was always about the fundamentals, so that's the way he coached and taught his players.

At every season-opening practice, the first thing he would do was teach his players how to put their socks on, one foot at a time! He did that before he ever let them dribble a ball or practice a play. Then, he'd tell them why. He'd say, "*If you don't put your socks on properly there will be wrinkles in your socks, and wrinkles cause blisters, and you can't play with blisters.*" That's teaching the basics! By emphasizing the fundamentals, Wooden built a foundation to last the season and, for many of them, throughout their professional careers into their personal lives.

He wasn't into unnecessary and wasted effort. And he definitely wasn't into showboating and showing up the opponent. Coach Wooden was committed to the basics of teaching his players the importance of building a solid foundation for success—in basketball and in life.

I believe that same principle applies to our spiritual lives. Focusing on the basics of God's Word is what Jesus did and is what He teaches us to do so that we can build a rock-solid life that will stand up against the storms. So, let's look at how we can build a rock-solid foundation and have a life that lasts.

Our text comes from the greatest sermon ever preached. When Jesus preached His Sermon on the Mount, everyone who heard it "*were amazed at his teaching...*" **Matthew 7:28-29 (NIV)**.

One thing Jesus taught in this sermon was the need to build one's faith on a sound foundation. He taught it by giving a simple yet powerful illustration of two home builders. Let's read it.

**24** *"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."*

**Matthew 7:24-27 (NIV)**

Jesus uses this word-picture to illustrate the importance of building the right foundation for our lives. He's saying that you can have two people who live in the same neighborhood, dress the same, speak the same, carry the same Bible, sing the same hymns. Yet there's a distinct difference between them. One actually hears and obeys the good news of Jesus. The other, hears, but goes his own way and does his own thing and fails to acknowledge God's Word or obey it. One builds a life founded on the rock that is the Word of God. But the other builds on the sand of self – A self-indulgent attitude and a self-satisfying existence.

Jesus illustration teaches us which life will stand when the storms come and which life will survive that ultimate storm of death and live on forever with God. It is the life whose foundation is embedded in the Rock of Ages.

Building your life on Jesus is essential, now and forever, if you are to build a life that will last. How do you do that? For the next few minutes, let's look at the actual building blocks of a life that is built to last. The first building block is found in:

### 1. Knowing Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord

The word "*therefore*" refers to one of the main points that He had just made – that some people will stand before God on judgment day and assume that their past actions alone will get them into heaven: "*Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?'*" **Matthew 7:22 (NIV)**. But to these, Jesus will say, "*I never knew you; away from me, you evildoers!*" **Matthew 7:23a (NIV)**.

In other words, getting into heaven is not based on what you do, but who you know. It's based on knowing Jesus through a deep personal relationship with Him. It's more than just knowing His name or certain facts about Him. I know a lot of famous people by name and by some of the movies or TV shows they've made. But they don't know me, and I really don't know them because we don't have a close personal relationship.

In the same way, some people claim to know Jesus because they know His name or a few facts about Him. But they don't have a life changing, committed personal relationship with Him.

So the question is this: Is Jesus real in your life, or is He just a name? Do you know Him as God's only Son or just as the Son of Joseph and Mary? John wrote in **1 John 4:15 (NIV)**, that "*If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God.*" You must believe in who He is—the Savior, the sinless and spotless Lamb of God, and in what He did for you—dying on the cross for your sins and rising again on the third day. Do you believe that about Jesus? Have you confessed Him as your Lord and Savior? If you haven't, you are not a Christian. It's impossible to be saved without confessing Jesus Christ as your Lord by personally and publicly identifying yourself as a follower of Jesus because **Romans 10:9 (NIV)** says, "*...if you confess with your mouth 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*"

Knowing Jesus as your Savior and Lord is the first building block of a life that lasts. The second is found in the:

### 2. Stability Found in Jesus Christ

For this building block, I want us to turn to **1 John 3:9 (NIV)**. John writes, "*No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in him; he cannot go on sinning, because he has been born of God.*"

The literal meaning of this verse is that a real, confessing Christian does not sin. Of course, we all know believers who sin. I am one of them and so are you. In fact, **Romans 3:23 (NIV)** tells us that we "*all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.*"

But there's a difference between the true Christian who is building a life upon the rock of God's Word and a person who isn't. The difference is that the person who is living in a close personal relationship with God will not continue to live in sin and practice sin and hold on to sin. That person also has the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives to warn and convict of the danger of sin. So the true Christian can't continue to do what he used to do. He's been transformed and changed by the power of Jesus Christ and founded on the bedrock of Christianity.

By contrast, a person who blatantly keeps on sinning is building a life on unstable sand. That person keeps on sinning because they have no relationship with Jesus and no daily walk or daily talk with Him, therefore they have no foundation on which to build a life that will last.

The Apostle Paul calls this stable foundation of Jesus Christ the "*chief cornerstone*" in whom "*the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*" **Ephesians 2:20-22 (NIV)**

If we're going to build a life that will last, we need a rock-solid foundation of knowing Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior and relying in Him and His Word as our stability. We must keep God's Word, abide in God's Word, love God's Word, and live God's Word. That's why Jesus said that those who build their houses on the rock are the ones who hear His word and keep His commandments and do what He says. Then they rely on the stability of Jesus to stand up against the storms of life.

If you're not relying on Christ when the storm hits, then what are you relying on? What are you relying on as this economic storm intensifies? And as the storm of divorce and family dysfunction rages? What are you relying on as our nation becomes more and more morally corrupt? How we react to these storms that are being churned up all around us is a good indicator of the reality and the stability of our foundation of faith.

People who lack a foundation built upon the rock of the reality of Jesus will crash and fall because they have no stability. The storms will tear their lives apart because they have no strength or support or stability to stand on. That is why we all need to heed what that great old gospel song written by Edward Mote proclaims: "*On Christ the solid Rock I stand, All other ground is sinking sand; All other ground is sinking sand.*"

Finally, a life that lasts must be built on the:

### **3. Eternity of Jesus Christ**

When we talk about building a life that lasts, of course, we're talking about a life beyond this physical life. We're talking about spending eternity with Christ.

We were all designed to live forever. God has set eternity in our souls and our spirits. This physical body will one day die and decay, but the real person God created will live forever. That is why Jesus taught us about the foolishness of building a life only for the here and now without any thought of eternity. That is why He taught us to "*seek first His kingdom and His righteousness*" in **Matthew 6:33 (NIV)**. He wants us to understand that this life isn't all there is. There is the promise of a better life in heaven awaiting us that defies comprehension. Paul said that, "*No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him*"-- **1 Corinthians 2:9 (NIV)**

We can only imagine what an eternity in heaven will be like – rejoicing in God's presence, being reunited with family and friends, being restored in glorified bodies that will never feel pain and will never grow old. That is what should keep us anchored to the rock that is our foundation. That's why we live for eternity. Because we know that death isn't the end. Death for the Christian is a doorway from this life and the entrance to eternity.

**Conclusion:** Jesus' Sermon on the Mount was all about choices. And in vs. 13-14, He said that those who choose the easy and the popular "*narrow gate*" and "*the broad road*" are choosing the path that will lead to their "*destruction.*" **Matthew 7:13 (NIV)**. And that is why death for the unbeliever is not something that will be pleasant. There are eternal consequences to everything we do in the here and now. We have so many choices in life. But for the afterlife, we get only two choices: heaven or hell! So the decision we make today determines our destiny, forever. If we choose to live without God in this life, we are choosing to live without God in the afterlife.

That's why Jesus came to earth. He came to save us from making the wrong choice of eternal death and offer us eternal life by accepting what He did on the cross as payment for our sins. He came to show us how to build a life that will last and show us that this life is just preparation for the eternal life to come.

We build our lives for eternity by building on the rock-solid foundation of Jesus Christ. Are you living in a close personal relationship with Him? Are you standing on and obeying the truth of His Word? Do you know Jesus as your Savior and Lord? Or more importantly, does He know you?