

Truths to Build On - Matthew 7:24-29

Introduction: A few years ago, when Elaine and I attended the Southern Baptist Convention in Orlando, the big story that was on every evening newscast was the big sinkhole problem in Central Florida. Every night they told the awful stories of houses, highways, and buildings all across Central FL being swallowed up by sinkholes. Of course, the problem that led to this demise of was not the construction of the buildings and roadways. The problem was with the foundation.

Jesus gives us a story of two foundations upon which are built two houses. The story is simple and to the point. It's a familiar story, but perhaps today you'll see some truths you've never noticed before.

For several months now, we've been looking at Jesus' Sermon on the Mount--the greatest sermon ever preached. In this message, Jesus spoke to a multitude of people, including His disciples and the religious establishment. The central theme of the message was the kingdom of God, and how a citizen of that kingdom should act.

So, as Jesus brings the message to a close, He's calling for a decision. He's already given His hearers a lot to think about – choosing the *"narrow road"* that leads to life over the *"broad way"* that leads to destruction; Watching out for the *"false prophets"* who would want to lead them astray; and reminding them that not everyone who calls Him *"Lord, Lord"* will enter His kingdom. So He gives one last illustration to tie everything together and drive home the point. **READ MT. 7:24-29.**

So, what is Jesus trying to get across as He closes the greatest sermon ever preached? I believe He is giving us some foundational truths on which we can build our lives on in this passage. The first foundational truth is:

1. We Have a Responsibility to God.

The word *"therefore"* links what Jesus just said with what He's about to say. And what He has said in this sermon is this:

- In order to become a Kingdom citizen, one must come through Jesus.
- Kingdom Citizens think and act differently from the world and even from how one was taught from the old religious traditions.
- Kingdom citizens are people who follow God's Will.

"Therefore," says Jesus, *"the only question that remains is: What are you going to do with Me? Are you going to respond to Me wisely or foolishly?"* Jesus says that *"everyone who hears these words of Mine and*

puts them into practice is like a wise man." But "everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man."

Notice that everyone heard the same words of Jesus, but not everyone would respond in the same way. Some would be *"wise"* and some would be *"foolish"* in their response. The difference in a gospel message is not in what one hears; the difference is in what one does with it. Either you will receive it and apply it and share it, or you will blow it off and reject it. If you receive it and accept it, then Jesus said you are wise, but if you reject it, then Jesus said you have made a foolish decision.

Why is it a foolish decision to reject Jesus? Well, consider this truth that is indisputable: Everyone will die someday, and after death, everyone will face the judgment. Phil. 2:10-11 (NIV) says that one day *"at the name of Jesus every knee (shall) bow...and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord..."* One day everyone will have to answer to God about what they have done with Jesus.

And this judgment won't be anything like it is here on earth. Here, we have a forum for just about every conceivable way to avoid responsibility. But at this judgment, there will be no avenue for argument; no basis for blame, no courtroom for debate, no discourse of dialog, no platform for personal opinion, and no exposition of excuses. One day, everyone will stand before God and no one will have a whisper of an excuse for rejecting Jesus.

We all are personally responsible to God. We will answer to God about what we've done with Jesus. We will answer for every sermon we tuned out, every Sunday School lesson we didn't pay attention to, every personal witness we blew off, every time we were *"just being lazy"* and skipped church, every gospel message we rejected. One day, our excuses will run out, because we do have a responsibility to God. The second foundational truth is:

2. There is a Proper Foundation for Life.

There are only two foundations one can choose to build his or her life upon. In vs. 24, Jesus talks about building one's life on:

A. A Firm Foundation (24). The word *"house"* in this parable is synonymous with a person's life, values, and principles to live by. We all make choices about what we will believe and not believe. We choose our morals, our values, our priorities, and our attitudes. And we all will have to choose what we will do with the message of Jesus.

This first man is called *"wise"* by Jesus because he looked beyond the present to the future. He saw that he

would need a strong foundation in life. He heard what Jesus had to say and he chose to obey it.

Jesus says that the foundation chosen by this man was *"the rock."* "Rock" here is the Greek word *petra* which means a mass of rock much like the side of a mountain. Whenever I think of this I think of Stone Mountain – a huge, solid, stable and unmovable mass of stone.

The Bible refers to Jesus as the *petra*, *"the Rock."* Jesus said in **Mt. 16:18 (NIV)** *"on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."*

We sing a hymn that's based on this passage: *"My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness; I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus name. On Christ, the solid Rock; I stand; all other ground is sinking sand."*

How do you build your life on the solid rock?

- By being certain of your salvation.
- By being obedient to Christ's commands.
- By become an active member in the local church.
- By learning and living out God's Word.
- By being in unity and fellowship with each other, and by using your spiritual gifts for ministry in the church.

"Wise" people build their lives on Jesus. But Jesus mentions another foundation one can choose in vs. 26. But it's:

B. A Faulty Foundation (26a). Jesus describes the person who builds on faulty ground as a *"foolish man."* This person has heard the words of Jesus but has not obeyed them. He's gone his own way. He's built his life on flimsy supports. He's rejected God's call in his life. He's put off salvation. He's heard the sermons and the Bible lessons. He's listened to friends speak of his need of Christ, but he chose to do nothing about it. Jesus says that man is foolish.

Imagine there is a house is on fire, and all the family makes it outside but the dad. He chooses to sit down in his easy chair even though the house is in flames. People call to him. The doorway is open. The firemen try to drag him out. He won't budge. I mean, this man literally feels the flames, sees clearly the way of escape, he hears the pleas to find safety but does nothing. Wouldn't you agree that that man would be foolish? Well, Jesus is saying here that the person who hears Christ's offer of eternal life, and does nothing about it is making a foolish decision.

Jesus says that this person is building his house on "*sand*." "*Sand*" is never stable. It shifts, drifts and blows with the wind. It's a faulty foundation on which to build.

What type of foundation seems best to you to build on? Note also in vs. 25 & 27 Jesus talks about:

C. A False Face (25, 27). Jesus uses almost identical language in vs. 25 & 27. These houses which are alike in every way except for the foundations are hit by the same storm which causes the rain, the high waters, and the strong winds.

In the same way there are many that look like genuine Christians, talk like genuine Christians, even act like genuine Christians but in reality have built their lives on shifting sand.

Jesus has already referred to these kinds of folks before when He called them "*ferocious wolves*" in "*sheep's clothing*" (15-16), and "*bad trees*" who bear "*bad fruit*" in 17-20. In 21-23, Jesus says that these folks will call Him "*Lord, Lord*" but He will say to them, "*I never knew you. Away from Me, you evildoers!*"

There are people who hear Gospel messages like this who look like, talk like, and act like believers, but in their heart of hearts, they don't know Christ. They wear the false face of a Christian, but they are building their lives on the wrong foundation. Be sure of your foundation. The third foundational is:

3. There are Various Storms that Occur in Life.

There are a couple of things that need to be said about these storms. First, you need to know about:

A. The Certainty of Storms. We're certainly no stranger to storms in America. We've all seen the devastation that tornadoes, hurricanes, hail and lightening storms can cause. Sometimes there are storm warnings and sometimes storms strike suddenly, but they come. And it doesn't matter what foundation we build our homes on, the storms will still come.

The same is true in life. It makes no difference who you are and what your status is in life the storms of life will come. They may come without warning, or you may have time to brace yourselves, but they still come. And they will come whether you've built your life on the firm foundation or the faulty foundation. That's why we are advised to build our lives on solid ground. Second, we need to know what these storms will look like when they come:

B. Common Types of Storms.

What kind of storms can we all expect in life. There are many, but to name a few, there are the:

Sickness Storms: Health problems. Disease, Injuries, etc..

Financial Floods: When the money runs out before the month does.

The Drought of Depression: Emotional worries which leads to fear, despair and hopelessness.

The Disaster of Death: A disaster that will affect everyone.

Charles Spurgeon wrote: *“There are tens of thousands to whom the preaching of the gospel is as music in the ears of a corpse. They shut their ears and will not hear, though the testimony be concerning God's own Son, and life eternal and the way to escape from everlasting wrath...When worldly trouble comes like a storm those persons who will not hear the words of Jesus have no consolation to cheer them; when sickness comes they have no joy of heart to sustain them under its pains; and when death, the most terrible of storms beats upon them they feel its full fury, but they cannot find a hiding place. They neglect the housing of their souls and when the hurricane of almighty wrath shall break forth in the world to come they will have no place of refuge.”*

Finally, Jesus gives the last foundational truth:

4. There Are Consequences to our Choices.

Jesus says the *“wise man,”* the one who built his house *“on the rock”* experienced all the forces of the storms of life. But, no matter how the storms beat down on his house. Jesus said *“it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.”*

When you build your life on the Rock of Ages, no matter when the storms blow, and no matter what type of storm it is, you can be sure you’ll be OK because your foundation is strong.

But for the *“foolish man”* who builds his life on the shifting *“sand,”* the outcome is quite different. Jesus says that as this man faced the storms of life, his house *“fell with a great crash.”*

I know we’ve all seen the awful pictures of houses built on a coast that have fallen because of erosion or mudslides. It’s literally sickening to watch. In the same way, but with much more devastating and eternal consequences, the great fall of a life not built on Christ is a fall into an eternity without Christ. Does that leave you heartbroken? Does it burden you? Can you stand the thought of another person you know dying without Christ?

Conclusion: I don't know how people face the storms of this world without Christ. As I look back on the storms I've faced in my life, I know Jesus has been my Rock.

- It was a tough blow when I lost my Mom when I was only 24, but I didn't fall because I had my foundation built upon the Rock of Ages.
- When the storm of uncertainty raged as Elaine went through her risky surgery a few years ago; we didn't fall because we had our foundations built upon the Rock of Ages.

- It was a shaky time for us when we faced the prospect of leaving a church a few years ago with no position to go to, but we didn't fall because we had our foundations built upon the Rock of Ages.

I'm telling you from first-hand experience, the wisest thing you can do is build your life on the solid rock of Jesus Christ. Don't make your primary investments in houses or land or stocks and bonds. Don't trust in your education. Don't lean on your abilities. Don't trust in your goodness. Don't make your career or the pursuit of material things your priority. Those things are like shifting sand, and building your life on them will have dire consequences when the storms of life begin to blow. Build your foundation on the solid rock of Jesus Christ, and nothing – nothing will shake you. Nothing will blow you away.