

Questions for Your Journal

Use these following questions to evaluate what you learned from Sunday's sermon.

Summary:

- The main thing the speaker wants me to do, be, and/or feel as a result of this message.

Application to My Life:

- What did God say to me through this message?
 - How does my life measure up to this word?
 - What action(s) will I take to bring my life in line with this word?
 - What truth do I need to study further?
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Hearing and Acting

A young pastor in Kentucky once told an elderly member of his church, "I expect to be a good preacher by the time I am fifty years old." The elderly man, blunt but true as steel, grunted, "I certainly hope so."¹ Whatever criteria we use to determine if a preacher is "good" or not is difficult to apply to Jesus. If we use results as a measure of the preacher's skill, we're reminded that Jesus' preaching was often met with hostility and only garnered the devotion of about 120 people during his lifetime. If a preacher's skill is determined by his eloquence and rhetorical skill, again we notice that Jesus' sermons were often simple and peppered with stories reflecting the daily life of a Jew in the first-century. In fact, His greatest sermon concludes, not with some great crescendo of rhetorical flourish or intense evangelistic appeal, but a simple illustration of life's most monumental choice: obedience or inaction.

According to Jesus, we are prone to hearing the Word of God and nodding in approval, but living as if we never heard it at all. In that sense, we are like the foolish man who upon deciding to build a house simply looks for the most convenient location or the location with the best view and gets to work. This lack of forethought or good decision-making leads to disastrous consequences, in home-building and life. But Jesus looked at His disciples, and He speaks to us today, warning us to be on guard against this tendency. In our foolishness, we believe that simply hearing good preaching is what we need to inoculate us against the cares and worries of life. We act as if the life of godliness we know we should live will slowly take root the longer we soak in truth. But according to Jesus, the question is **not** are we hearing truth, but are we acting on the truth we hear? Jesus knew the temptation we face, and His warning brings the decision home.

Having heard Jesus' warning and faced the potential consequences, will we willingly choose to build our lives on a foundation other than His teachings? The work of building this life will surely be more difficult than a life lived without regard for His words—how much easier is hating your enemies than loving them and praying for them (Matt

5:44)?—but if we would truly be His disciples, we must live according to His word (John 8:31). We must strive to be “doers” and not “hearers only” (Jas 1:22).

Jesus, thou only art
The sure foundation stone,
Firm as th' eternal hills art thou,
I build on thee alone.

Cemented fast to thee
No stone is laid in vain,
My hope defies th' assaults of hell,
The flood, the wind, the rain.²

Encounter

Take a few minutes to read Matthew 7:13–29 in a couple of Bible translations. Make a note of any differences between the translations and anything that especially jumps out at you.

Reflect

Jesus concludes the “sermon on the mount” with a warning to his disciples: they can either obey His teaching and experience true life or disregard all that He’s taught them and find death. **Read Matthew 7:13–14. Why Jesus call the kingdom life “narrow”? Look up some other places where He uses that word. What do you notice about it?**

The way of life that Jesus offers is not simply about external obedience—even wolves can disguise themselves as sheep by putting on their “clothes” (Matt. 7:15). Instead, Jesus calls His disciples to obedience that is “rooted” in a changed heart. **Read Matthew 7:15–23 and Ephesians 4:1–3. Think back over the last week. How did your behavior reflect your identity as a disciple of Jesus. Use Ephesians 4:1–3 to consider specifics.**

Jesus' final illustration of the choice between life and death is the familiar story of the "wise man who built his house upon the rock." **Read Matthew 7:24–27 slowly, contemplating each word. Make a note of any detail you had previously forgotten or that jumped out at you in a fresh way.**

The wise man and foolish man illustrate two approaches to applying Jesus' teaching. Both men experience the "storms" of life, but their foundations make the difference. **What have you built your life on? What things do you expect to keep you safe from life's storms (e.g., financial security, good health, strong friendships)? What does Jesus expect us to build our lives on? How can you do that this week?**

Examine

Based on 2 Timothy 3:16 (*"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness"*), this series of questions is intended to help you figure out what you should do or believe in response to this text. (*This passage may not have a clear answer for each question. Just use them to prompt your thinking.*)

1. What does this passage tell me to believe?

(How does it teach me?)

2. What does this passage tell me not to believe?

(How does it reprove me?)

3. How does this passage tell me not to live?

(How does it correct me?)

4. How does this passage tell me to live?

(How does it train me in righteousness?)

Embrace

After spending significant time with this passage, you've probably learned a lot and heard God speak to you through His Word. Look back at your responses to the previous questions and ask God to show you how you can respond to this text this week.

Write down some ideas for how you can respond to the truth of God's Word.

About The Map

The Map exists to help you consistently reflect on Scripture as you pursue maturity in Christ. When you devote yourself to reading God's Word, and meditate on what you read, you're allowing Him to shape your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors.

NOTES:

1. G. Curtis Jones, *1000 Illustrations for Preaching and Teaching* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1986), 301.
2. C. H. Spurgeon, "The Two Builders and Their Houses," in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 16 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1870), 132.



Disciple-Making Guide

Kids Kindergarten through 6th grade receive Adventure Tokens for discipleship activities completed during the week. They can spend them at the Adventure Store on the last Sunday of the month.

Big Picture Questions for Unit 36: “The God Who Makes All Things New”

Preschool: Q: What will happen when Jesus comes back?
A: *Jesus will make all things new.*

Kids (1-6): Q: What will happen when Jesus returns?
A: *Jesus will destroy all evil and make all things new.*

This Week’s Family Reading Plan

for Preschoolers: *Jesus Ascended to Heaven + Jesus Christ Returns**

Day 1: *John 11; Matthew 21:1-13*

Day 2: *John 13*

Day 3: *John 14-15*

Day 4: *John 16*

Day 5: *Matthew 24:1-31*

*Preschool readings are taken from *The Big Picture Interactive Bible Stories for Toddlers, New Testament* (B&H Publishing Group), available at Amazon.com & LifeWay Christian Store.

Key Passage for Unit 36: “The God Who Makes All Things New”

Preschoolers: “Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new” (Revelation 21:5, *Christian Standard Bible*).

Kids (1-6 grade): “Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, I am making everything new” (Revelation 21:5, *Christian Standard Bible*).

Northway’s Family Ministry uses *The Gospel Project* to help preschoolers, kids, and students grow in their knowledge of Scripture and of Jesus Christ, about whom it was all written (Luke 24:44-49).



Adventure Token Coupon

Fill this out and bring it to Bible Study for your tokens!

I worked on learning my big picture question and key passage _____.

I read my Bible at home _____.

Child’s Name _____.

Parent’s Signature _____.

30 BIBLICAL BASICS

CORE BELIEFS

God | 2 Corinthians 13:13

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Personal God | Psalm 121:1-2

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Salvation by Grace | Ephesians 2:8-9

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible | 2 Timothy 3:16-17

I believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God that guides my belief and action.

Identity in Christ | John 1:12

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church | Ephesians 4:15

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth.

Humanity | John 3:16

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion | Psalm 82:3-4

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Stewardship | Psalm 24:1-2

I believe that everything I am and everything I own belong to God.

Eternity | John 14:1-2

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus will return to judge all people and to establish His eternal kingdom.

CORE PRACTICES

Worship | Psalm 95:1-2

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer | Psalm 66:18-20

I pray to God to know him, to find direction for my life, and to lay my requests before him.

Bible Study | Hebrews 4:12

I study the Bible to know God and his truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness | Matthew 6:33

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Total Surrender | Romans 12:1

I dedicate my life to God's purposes.

Biblical Community | Acts 2:44-47

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, in the life of others, and in the world.

Spiritual Gifts | Romans 12:4-6

I know my spiritual gifts and use them to fulfill God's purposes.

Offering My Time | Colossians 3:17

I offer my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving My Resources | 2 Corinthians 8:7

I give my resources to fulfill God's purposes.

Sharing My Faith | Ephesians 6:19-20

I share my faith with others to fulfill God's purposes.

CORE VIRTUES

Love | 1 John 4:10-12

I am committed to loving God and loving others.

Joy | John 15:11

Despite my circumstances, I feel inner contentment and understand my purpose in life.

Peace | Philippians 4:6-7

I am free from anxiety because I have found peace with God, peace with others, and peace with myself.

Self-Control | Titus 2:11-13

I have the power through Christ to control myself.

Hope | Hebrews 6:19-20

I can cope with the hardships of life because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

Patience | Proverbs 14:29

I am slow to anger and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness | 1 Thessalonians 5:15

I choose to be kind and good in my relationships with others.

Faithfulness | Proverbs 3:3-4

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my loyalty to those relationships.

Gentleness | Philippians 4:5

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Humility | Philippians 2:3-4

I choose to esteem others above myself.

The 30 Biblical Basics are the skeleton of a person being formed into the image of Jesus by His Spirit (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18), a helpful framework for the Christian's thoughts, actions, and character. As we commit ourselves to growing in Christ through the process of spiritual formation, we pray these statements become increasingly true of us. When they are, we'll be able to carry out the biblical mandate to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Luke 10:27), and to truly **love, live, and lead like Jesus.**