

Sermon 4-10-19 Week 5 Build on Rock Matthew 7:24-27

Dear Builders on the Rock:

Jesus gives us a story of two builders.

- Not two dreamers who just talk about building a home
- Not two philosophers who go on and on about the value of what we call home
- Not two architects who can draw a nice home on paper

Jesus is talking about doing, about acting. Both people in Jesus' story build. They make something. In this case, houses.

Another thing the two builders in Jesus' story have in common---besides being practical people of action---is that their homes are both tested by the forces of nature. The quality of both buildings will be measured by their ability...

- To withstand the assaults of storms
- To withstand the assaults of high winds and water

These two builders are building in a real world where a storm can take a house down in a matter of seconds.

So what's the difference between the builders?

- The first is "wise"
- The second is "foolish"

That's how Jesus contrasts the two builders.

What makes the first builder wise? He builds his house on rock.

What makes the second builder foolish? He builds his house on sand.

That's the difference --- rock and sand.

- Rock is hard and solid
- Sand is soft and shifting

Foolish builders expect their house to stand on shifting sand. The wisdom of both builders is measured by their building's durability in a storm.

One lasts, the other fails.

As Jesus spells out the meaning of his story, he makes it clear that both builders represent people who "hear these words of mine."

It's not a matter of one hearing Jesus teach and the other missing it.

- Both listen to Jesus
- Both would be the ones who read the words in red in their New Testaments...the words Jesus spoke
- Both listen to sermons
- Both may participate in Bible study
- Both know what Jesus has taught

So what's the difference between these two listeners to Jesus' teaching?

Wise builder who builds on the rock

- The wise one listens to Jesus teach, understands his teaching and puts it into practice. Jesus says this one "hears these words of mine and does them." He is one who is...
 - Poor in spirit; mourns over sin; hungers for God's righteousness
 - Pure in heart; makes peace; persecuted; salt and light
 - Loves his enemies; prays humbly; stores up treasures in heaven
 - Trusts God to provide for all his needs; does not judge other people's hearts; enters through the narrow gate
 - His house is solid and stable and withstand storms
 - Wise man will survive for his whole life rests on solid foundation of Jesus Christ and His Word
 - He knows that God is with him and will see him through difficult circumstances
 - He knows he belongs to the Lord

Foolish builder who builds on the sand

- The foolish one hears Jesus teach, but never does what Jesus says. This listener to Jesus' teaching "hears these words of mine and does not do them." He is one who...
 - Does not really recognize his personal sinfulness
 - Does not really look to Christ alone for forgiveness and salvation
 - Trust his own works and merits
 - When he faces the same ordeals as the wise builder his whole house falls apart because he does not have Jesus as his foundation.

"No one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ." I Corinthians 3:11

- Work righteousness will lead to disaster
- Man made religion will lead to disaster

So the story of the two builders is really a story about what Jesus expects from those who listen to him teach and preach.

- He wants more than showing up to hear him
- He wants more than praise for his valuable insights
- He wants more than an impressive theological library
- He wants more than a list of truths and values to which we subscribe
- He wants a life based on his teachings
- He wants us to do what he has told us to do
- He wants us to do his will even when it's difficult, even when storms rage.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is not so much an ideology or a philosophy as it is a blueprint for how to build a Christ-like life.

His practical teachings show us how to navigate our relationships in Christ-like ways. The sermon is meant to show itself in how we live day-in and day-out, when life is easy and when life is hard.

It's not just about what we believe but how we live.

Wisdom puts truths into practice

In the ancient Greek world, there was an ascending staircase of maturity. It went from knowledge to understanding to wisdom.

- Knowledge was learning certain truths
- Understanding was grasping those truths so that you could actually articulate them
- Wisdom, though, was putting those truths into practice, doing them.

Jesus is saying here that wisdom is putting his teachings into practice.

So imagine you get really sick...sick to where your life is at stake.

- Your physician prescribes a treatment that includes a protocol of specific meds, surgery and diet
- You respect your doctor but you may want a 2nd opinion
- But wisdom would dictate that you follow your doctor's orders

You will take those pills, have that surgery and follow that diet. It would be foolish to ignore your doctor and follow your own opinion.

It's like that with Jesus' teachings

- They are meant to be done.
- He wants to see us praying and forgiving
- Loving our enemies and helping the poor
- To make peace and show mercy
- To be the salt of the earth and light in this dark world

These works on our part have no merit in themselves, but they do provide evidence of the presence of a living faith.

“Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.... not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it --- he will be blessed in what he does.” James 1:22ff

We now listen to the words of Jesus in the shadow of the cross.

- That cross of love and sacrifice has become for us a motivation to build our lives on what Jesus has taught.
- We practice what he teaches not out of fear of judgment or strict obedience, but out of love and gratitude.

As we watch Jesus weather the storm of his Passion, we see him practicing what he taught ---

- Humility
- Reconciliation
- Forgiveness
- Prayer

He withstood his storm with amazing grace and strength and he did that for us.

No wonder printing his words in red makes so much sense in Bibles.

- He spilled his real, red blood when he suffered and died for us
- His love constrains us to be not just good listeners to his words but dynamic listeners who build on rock.
- Putting his words to work and trusting that the gates of hell will not prevail against us. Matthew 16:18