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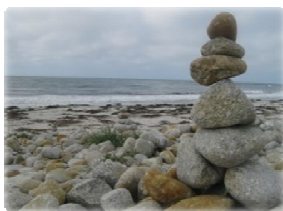
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What Have You Built YOUR Life Upon?

Matthew 7:24: (NASB) *Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock.*



Life can be likened to a house. Some houses are spacious and elegant - people tend to notice them when they go by. Some houses are smaller, functional and more basic - people tend to look past them when they go by. When you think about it, whether the house is elegant or basic, the most important part of it is its foundation. What that foundation is made of and built upon has a direct bearing on how long that house is able to endure. What about YOUR life? What is your foundation made of and what is it built upon? Is your Christian life able to weather any storm?

Jesus uttered the parable of the solid foundation in a very detailed context of clear teachings to his followers. The Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke both record this parable.

We will read and discuss a compilation of these two Gospels to try and get the full meaning:

Luke 6:46-49: (NASB) and **Matthew 7:24-27:** (NASB) *Why do you call me, Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say? Therefore everyone who comes to me and hears these words of mine and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: (he) may be compared to a wise man who dug deep and laid a foundation, who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, because it had been well built, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand, on the ground without any foundation; The rain fell, and the torrent burst against it and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and immediately it collapsed and great was its fall and the ruin of that house.*

Now an overview of the context: First, there are great crowds listening but Jesus focuses on his disciples. **Matthew 4:25:** (NRSV) *And great crowds followed him...* **Matthew 5:1-2:** (NRSV) ¹...he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying...

He begins by teaching his disciples (and us!) the cause and effect of godly attributes called the Beatitudes: **Matthew 5:3:** (NASB) *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

Jesus moves on to teaching about how to properly and humbly apply holiness in our lives: **Matthew 5:23-24:** (NRSV) ²³So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar and go...

Practice your holiness in secret: **Matthew 6:1-8:** Jesus next teaches us to realize that to be holy we need to identify what our true treasure in life is: **Matthew 6:19-21:** (NRSV) *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

Don't worry about the things of this world - instead seek God first. **Matthew 6:33:** (NRSV) *But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

Part of holiness is not judging others in a manner that you do not want to be judged: **Matthew 7:1-2:** (NRSV) ¹Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. ²For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get.

Holiness means we can ask of God who gives generously. **Matthew 7:7:** (NRSV) *Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you.*

But what are you supposed to ask for and what will you receive?

Holiness means we will live by the Golden Rule: **Matthew 7:12:** (NRSV) *In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.*

Holiness means we take "the road less traveled" in our search for God. **Matthew 7:13:** (NRSV) *Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it.*



Holiness means loyalty only to God's will: Matthew 7:21: (NRSV) *Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven.*

Summing up, Jesus taught us to be bright and shining lights of mercy, humility, kindness and loyalty. He taught us many aspects of what it means to be holy.

It is here our parable begins with a profoundly important verse only found in Luke: Luke 6:46: (NASB) *Why do you call me, Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?*

How do we actually build upon Jesus' name and authority and not just give it lip service? An enormous percentage of Christianity, in our opinion, talk about the name of Jesus but do not actually "live" the name of Jesus.

Observing similarities of both "builders":

- Both hear the words of Jesus.
- Both are moved by his words -they follow him, but each in a different way.
- Both build a house - they both build a life inspired by Jesus' words.
- Both are tested with rain, flood and wind.
- Both end up with results that are directly related to what their house - their life - was truly built upon.

This is a story that truly shows us the difference between true and false Christianity. What we produce in our lives can look the same, but when the difficult tests come, it will be revealed as to what is underneath.

A word against false Christianity: 2 Timothy 2:15-19: (NASB) ¹⁵*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth. ¹⁶But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness, ¹⁷and their talk will spread like gangrene. Among them are Hymenaeus and Philetus, ¹⁸men who have gone astray from the truth saying that the resurrection has already taken place, and they upset the faith of some. ¹⁹Nevertheless, the firm foundation of God stands, having this seal, The Lord knows those who are His, and, everyone who names the name of the Lord is to abstain from wickedness.*

What is meant by the symbols in the story - the rock, sand, rain, flood and the wind?

This parable is one of the few specifically spoken to Jesus' followers, so it is NOT typical. Most were spoken to outsiders and were purposely difficult to grasp - this parable gives us plenty of background for understanding.

The previous verses in Matthew: Matthew 7:21-23: (NASB) ²¹*Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven will enter. There is a firm warning here! IT IS ALL ABOUT LIVING GOD'S WILL - NOT JUST REPEATING IT! ²²Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name cast out demons, and in your name perform many miracles? ²³And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from me, you who practice lawlessness. Just because one may look like a Christian, does not mean they are living true to Christianity!*

The previous verse from Luke: Luke 6:45: (NASB) *The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.*

What lives in one's heart truly determines what one's life will stand for! Jesus sets the groundwork for today's parable with practical teachings of the goodness and holiness he is looking for vs. a pseudo, self-centered holiness.

Let's break down the Parable into discussion points:

Luke 6:46: (NASB) *Why do you call me, Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?*

Rock - The foundation of Jesus Christ himself. He is The Way, The Truth and The Life!



Sand - The things of this earth; foundations of human tradition. The word for *sand* in Matthew is the same word used to describe *the sands of the seashore* in the Abrahamic promise. The word for *ground* in the Luke account is often used to describe the earth.

Rain - Water is often a symbol for truth in Scripture. Water is here used to severely test and shake the good house and aids in collapsing the foundationless house. Truth would not severely test a house/life built on Christ; it would make it stronger. *What if* the rain in this instance is the false teachings of Satan - truth corrupted - those things that appear to be Christian truth but in fact are nothing more than deceptions designed to destroy? "Truth" can be falsified. Real truth in this parable is shown in Jesus' initial statement - *Why do you call me, Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?* What Jesus says IS truth! True Christianity is not about great abundance of material things.

Torrent - A flood. Perhaps this represents Satan's evil influence pouring down on this earth so thoroughly and so torrentially that it causes overflow of natural earthly rivers that are normally life-giving and makes them torrents of destruction - beating and battering all things good in its path.

Winds - The storms and trials of this world - here again we sometimes see the wind as a symbol for God's Spirit - God's unseen power and influence. In this parable we can perhaps look at the wind in the same vain as water - a false and unseen power of the spirit of Satan, designed to destroy anything that is holy in God's sight.

Luke 6:46-47: (NASB) and Matthew 7:24: (NASB) *Why do you call me, Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say? Therefore everyone who comes to me and hears these words of mine and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like.*

There is a three-part process here: 1. Come to Jesus

Matthew 11:28-30: Coming to Jesus is easy and attractive! Many have come and will come. But what are they coming for and what do they do once they get there? That is what differentiates true from false followers of Christ.

There is a three-part process here: 2. Hear the words of Jesus

Mark 4:10-12: Hearing Jesus is not just about the auditory experience; it is about absorbing and applying his teaching.

There is a three-part process here: 3. Act on the words of Jesus

John 13:12-17: To do what Jesus taught is a lifelong learning experience. It starts with humility which grows into selflessness, which in turn grows into holiness.

Luke 6:48: (NASB) and Matthew 7:24: (NASB) *(he) may be compared to a wise man who dug deep and laid a foundation, who built his house on the rock.*

This three-part process produces a wise builder! 1 Corinthians 3:9-14: Spiritual wisdom is building all of our life on the sole and solid foundation of Jesus - no more, no less. What we build will be tested. We must build with the right things and on the right foundation.

What happens when the dark powers of Satan are unleashed on a true Christian life?

Luke 6:48: (NASB) and Matthew 7:25: (NASB) *And the rain fell, and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, because it had been well built, for it had been founded on the rock.*

How can we tell if we are building on the right foundation? If you are building on the rock of anyone other than Jesus, you need to move! The message is one of love, character and selflessness.

The last phrase of this portion of the parable is the key to any and all success any Christian can ever hope to have: Romans 8:35-39: We must know what our life, our "house," is all about. Once we accept the sacrificial nature of our Christian walk, we can then fully embrace our deliverance in Christ. If we do not accept our walk as sacrificial as opposed to one of abundance of wealth and comfort, our house is built on the wrong foundation. ³⁷*But in all these things we overwhelmingly conquer through Him who loved us.* ³⁸*For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come,*



nor powers, ³⁹nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. This promise only holds true if we are building our foundation on the sacrificial walk and character of Jesus.

Know your enemy and prepare accordingly! Ephesians 6:10-13: We have been given a significant support system so our own personal weaknesses do not create fatal vulnerabilities in the structure of our Christian life. Sometimes we are inherently weak.

Ephesians 4:11-15: This talks about the maturity of the entire body of Christ. To become mature, we, as part of the body, have to work together. This strong support system helps us not be tossed about *by every wind of doctrine*. What God wants for us is often so different than what we want for ourselves, but He knows what is best for our highest spiritual welfare - not our temporal comforts. Bottom line...live your belief! We will not find spiritual answers from worldly things.

If we do not, the storm of Satan's influence will find your weaknesses: James 1:22-25: *Not merely hearers who delude themselves* - When we build our Christian house, it will be tested by Satan, who wants nothing more than to topple the house of someone who professes the name of Christ.

Let's look at those who do NOT do what Jesus says: Luke 6:48-49: (NASB) and Matthew 7:26-27: (NASB) *Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand on the ground without any foundation; The rain fell, and the torrent burst against, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and immediately it collapsed —and great was its fall and the ruin of that house.*

Notice the first step in the process - coming to Jesus - is missing - perhaps this shows a lack of true devotion and focus. They hear and build but have not come to a place where they see a need to dig down for a solid foundation. Building on the sand is symbolic of building things on top of this world. We cannot build a Christian life on the foundation of the things of this world. The two do not mix.

There is a great similarity to another Parable: Matthew 13:18-22: Satan is ready to interfere with anyone focused on Jesus...Each example here was one of shortsighted feelings towards Christ rather than a humble acceptance of the will of God through Christ. Satan's storms come in many different ways! James 1:6-7: Double-mindedness indicates a lack of true devotion and loyalty.

Matthew 23:1-7: This sounds like Christian leaders today who draw attention to themselves. This is not what true Christianity is about. Hypocrisy is a sign of an unholy heart. There are many "Christianity-like" foundations today that may look and sound like Christianity, but when you really dig down - what are they built on? If they are built on anything other than the solid foundation of Scripture and Jesus Christ, they are NOT Christianity. Jesus himself said, *I do not know you, you workers of lawlessness*. That is how serious this is.

Finally, a prophecy that firmly suggests pseudo-Christian characteristics as our temptations today! 2 Timothy 3:1-5: Outward forms of godliness are merely tools of self-deception, blessed and approved by Satan.

Is your "house" in danger of being swept away by the flood of satanic deceit and the pounding winds of satanic influence in our lives? Or is your house going to stand firm against such trouble and testings because it is built upon a foundation that will not be shaken?

Satan's influence is incredibly powerful, but the power and foundation of Christ is bigger and stronger and eternally lasting. Are we truly devoted and loyal to that foundation?

*So, what have you built your life upon?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!*