

AND THE RAINS CAME DOWN

Parable 3: The Two Builders

Sermon 3

Matthew 7:24-27

I. ILLUSTRATION—GREAT PYRAMID OF GIZA—BUILT ON SOLID ROCK

- Over 2500 years old when Jesus saw it [finished c. 2561 BC]
- Built for Pharaoh Khufu (Greek: Cheops)—by his vizier, Hemon
- Size—**592,000 sf**—over 2 ½ football fields long and wide
- Height—**48 stories**—tallest building for 3800 years—until Lincoln Cathedral (1311)
- Weight—**6 million tons**
- Stones—**2.3 million**—weighing 2-30 tons each
- 20 years to build—200,000 skilled workers—800 tons/day—12 blocks/hour (24/7)
- Originally covered with polished Tura limestone—Egyptians called it ‘Ikhet’—‘Glorious Light’
- Oldest of 7 wonders of ancient world—only one intact
 - Colossus of Rhodes—collapsed—earthquake—after just 54 years (226 BC)
 - Outlasted last 2—Alexandrian Lighthouse & Mausoleum at Halicarnassus by 6-7 centuries
 - Earthquake (1303) that destroyed Lighthouse just loosened limestone cover of pyramid
- **Built atop plateau on mountain of solid granite**

II. BIBLICAL TEXT—Matthew 7:24-27—Jesus’ closing statement in Sermon on Mount

Mt 7:24-27—24 *“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. 25 And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. 26 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. 27 The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”*

III. CONTEXT

A. MATTHEW

1. FIRST PARABLE IN MATTHEW
2. FINAL WORDS OF SERMON ON MOUNT
3. SERMON ON MOUNT—FIRST OF FIVE MAJOR DISCOURSES IN MATTHEW
 - a. All end with a parable except—The Missionary Discourse of Mt 10
 - b. The other three discourses ending with parables are
 - **Mt 13**—Kingdom of Heaven [8 parables]—householder brings out new/old treasure
 - **Mt 18**—The Church—wicked and ungrateful servant

- **Mt 23-25**—End Times [Olivet]—sheep and goats

B. LUKE

1. FIRST PARABLE IN LUKE ALSO
2. PARALLEL PASSAGE

Lk 6:47-49—*47 Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them, I will show you whom he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. 49 But the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great.*”

IV. PURPOSES OF PARABLE

A. EXHORTATION—TO THOSE WHO PROFESS TO FOLLOW HIM

1. THEY MUST NOT JUST LISTEN—BUT ALSO OBEY WHAT HE SAYS
2. **ILLUSTRATION—GANDHI’S VIEW OF CHRISTIANS**
 - o When missionary **E. Stanley Jones** asked him why he did not become a Christ-follower
 - o *“Oh, I don’t reject Christ. I love Christ. It’s just that so many of you Christians are so unlike Christ. If Christians would really live according to the teachings of Christ, as found in the Bible, all of India would be Christian today.”*

B. EXPLANATION—OF WHAT HE HAS JUST SAID ABOUT THE KINGDOM

1. SCHOLARS SAY IT EXPLAINS ALL THREE PREVIOUS SECTIONS—**vv13-23**
2. BUT IT EXPLAINS ONLY THE LAST SECTION—**vv21-23**
 - a. Not the wide and narrow gate—**vv13-14**
 - That concerns **true seekers and non-seekers**
 - Many are lost because they reject His way and go down the wrong road
 - b. Not the wolves in sheep’s clothing—**vv15-20**
 - That concerns those who **endanger and fleece the sheep**
 - They are lost because they abuse the gospel—false prophets
 - You can tell them by their bad fruit—contrasted with true disciples’ good fruit
 - c. It does explain **vv21-23**

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. Many 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?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.

1. *Everyone*—v24—connects with *not everyone*—v21
2. Now Jesus explains—why He will not acknowledge some who claim to follow Him
 - Not because they did not **listen**
 - Not because they did not **believe**
 - Not because they did not **profess**
 - Not because they did not **do good things**
 - Instead—because they **did not do the will of the Father**
 - **But what does that mean?**

V. MEANING

1. TWO KINDS OF PEOPLE CLAIM TO FOLLOW JESUS
 - They *either do* what He says—*or do not do* what He says
2. THOSE WHO OBEY HIS WORDS—ARE WISE
 - They will survive the storm—and be saved
3. THOSE WHO DO NOT OBEY HIS WORDS—ARE FOOLISH
 - They will not survive the storm—but will fall
4. JESUS' WORDS ARE AUTHORITATIVE AND FINAL—LIKE THE FATHER'S
 - a. He has already made this point six times
 - You have heard it said—but **I** say to you—Mt 5
 - Regarding: murder, adultery, divorce, vows, violence, and enemies
 - b. He later asserted
 - *Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away*—Mk 13
 - c. Here—*these words of mine*—[emphatic pronoun]
 - Jesus equates His words—vv 24, 26—with the will of the Father—v21
5. CONCLUSION—WE DEDUCE
 - a. Jesus **will acknowledge** those who obey His words
 - They do the will of the Father—and will enter the kingdom of heaven
 - b. Jesus **will not acknowledge** those who do not obey His words
 - They do not do the will of the Father—and will not enter the kingdom of heaven

VI. THE PARABLE

A. BUILDING THE HOUSE

1. BOTH MEN ARE 'BUILDERS'
 - a. Both start with constructive intentions

- To build a life of faith—kingdom builders—Christ-followers
 - To build a faithful life—that will endure—stand the test of time
- b. This is not about those who reject Christ outright—or false prophets
2. THERE ARE ONLY TWO WAYS TO BUILD
- a. The **wise** way—on rock—**or**—the **foolish** way—on sand
- b. There are not multiple ways
- God gives us a clear-cut choice
 - Not multiple options—based on human views of truth—not postmodernity
- c. Other scripture passages make this a clear-cut choice
1. **Israel was to choose** obedience or disobedience—**Lev 26—Dt 27-28**
 - Confirmed by—**standing before Mt Gerizim and Mt Ebal—Josh 8**
 2. **Israel was to choose** life (obedience) or death (idolatry)—**Dt 30**
 3. **Parable of Ten Virgins**—either Wise (prepared) or Foolish (unprepared)—**Mt 25**
- d. The two ways
- On the solid foundation—the rock = *hears and does these words of mine*
 - On the shifting foundation—the sand = *hears and does not do these words of mine*
3. THE **WISE** BUILDER
- a. Builds on **the** rock
- Not just **a** rock—but definite article—there is only **one rock** like this one
- b. Builds on the **rock** = **πετρα**—large formation
- Not just a stone—**πετρος**—or **λιθος**
 - Not porous rock like lava
 - Not a substitute for stone—like **brick**
 - **Rabbi Elisah ben Abuyah (c 100 AD)—tells similar parable**
- One in whom there are good works, who has studied much Torah, to what may he be likened? To a person who builds first with stones and afterward with bricks: even when much water comes and collects by their side, it does not dislodge them. But one in whom there are no good works, though he studied Torah, to what may he be likened? To a person who builds first with bricks and afterward with stones: even when a little water gathers, it overturns them immediately.**
- c. The rock—here—is **not Jesus**
1. Jesus **is** the rock elsewhere—**Is 28:16**—the **cornerstone**
 - We affirm this truth—when we sing

On Christ the solid rock I stand

All other ground is sinking sand

2. But here—the rock is—*hearing and doing these words of mine*
- d. Emphasis on ‘doing’
 1. ποιῶ—used 18 times in Sermon on Mount
 2. In this chapter—8 times
 - 7:12—**Golden Rule**—Do to others as you would have them do unto you
 - 7: 17-19—5 times—**bearing fruit** is—‘doing’ fruit
 - 7: 21-22—doing **the Father’s will**—is not just doing miracles
- e. Jesus requires a belief that ‘works’
 - Lk 6:48 says—the wise man—*dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock*
 - This does not mean—‘works’ salvation
 - This does not mean—Jesus’ words are hidden and obscure
 - This does not mean—we must have a ‘deep’ and secret knowledge
 - It does mean simply—we must put forth a good-faith effort—to obey His words

4. THE FOOLISH BUILDER

- a. Builds on sand
 - Sand is—*hearing and not doing these words of mine*
 - He enjoys listening—is entertained—even applauds Jesus—but **does** nothing
- b. Ezekiel faced the same situation

Ezek 33:31-32—They come to you as people come, and sit before you as My people and hear your words, but they do not do them, for they do the lustful desires expressed by their mouth, and their heart goes after their gain. Behold, you are to them like a sensual song by one who has a beautiful voice and plays well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not practice them.

- c. The fool hears Christ—pretends to follow—but does his own thing—his own way
- d. **Illustration—“I Did It My Way”—Sinatra and Elvis**

**And now, the end is near
And so I face the final curtain
My friend, I'll say it clear
I'll state my case, of which I'm certain
I've lived a life that's full
I traveled each and every highway
And more, much more than this, I did it my way**

**For what is a man, what has he got?
If not himself, then he has naught
To say the things he truly feels**

And not the words of one who kneels
The record shows I took the blows and did it my way!

- ☆ Is this really a tribute to rugged individualism?
- ☆ **Irony**—it took 3 composers to write it!
- ☆ Claude Francois, Gilles Thibaut, Jacques Revaux

5. CONCLUSIONS

- a. **Hearing and doing** Jesus' words—is **wisdom**—building on the rock
- b. **Hearing and not doing** Jesus' words—is **foolishness**—building on sand
- c. Hearing and Doing—later stressed by His disciples
 - James—**Jas 1:22-25**—*be doers of the word, not hearers only, deceiving yourselves*
 - John—**I Jn 3:18**—*love not in word and tongue, but in deed and truth*

B. TESTED BY STORMS

1. THE PICTURE

- a. House threatened on all sides
 - Rain from above
 - Raging torrents below
 - Winds beating the sides
- b. Raging torrents
 - **Example: destructiveness of torrential wadis—and debris**
- c. Wind beating
 1. The wind strikes the houses differently
 - a. House on rock—**v25**—stronger verb action—**προσπιπτω**
 - ✓ Slamming very hard (stronger)
 - b. House on sand—**v27**—weaker verb action—**προσκοπτω**
 - ✓ Stumbling upon (weaker)
 2. House on the rock—despite being hit harder—still stands
 3. House on sand—with very little pressure—collapses

2. STORMS REPRESENT TWO THINGS

- o The **difficulties** of this life
- o **Death** and final **judgment**.

3. THE DIFFICULTIES OF THIS LIFE

- a. Everyone has 'rain' and storms in life
 - **Mt 5:45**—God sends rain on the just and unjust
 - Rain can be good—or destructive

- b. Bad things happen to everyone
 - Building on the rock **does not prevent** the storm—it helps us weather it
 - This does not mean we will not suffer ill effects from the storm
 - But the ill effects will not destroy the house—we will stand firm
 - Those with a strong foundation will endure
- c. Weathering the storm
 1. Those on rock have greater peace and sense of security in the storm
 - **Example—John Wesley and the Moravians**
 2. It is times of crisis—when the foundation of our faith is truly tested
 3. We endure—not by the strength of our own faith
 - But because we are anchored in Christ’s words
 4. **Adversity is necessary**—to prove the authenticity of our discipleship
 - a. On the rock—**genuine faith** is strengthened through adversity
 - ☆ **Jas 1:2-4**—trials build perseverance, which makes us ‘perfect’
 - ☆ **Rom 5:3-5**—trials build perseverance, that gives us experience, then hope
 - b. On sand—**superficial faith** erodes
 - ☆ **Jas 1:6-7**—Like double-minded persons—tossed about by the wind

4. DEATH AND FINAL JUDGMENT

- a. See the context of the previous section—**vv21-23**
 - What will happen when we stand ready to enter the kingdom of heaven?
 - Will Christ acknowledge **or** disavow us?
- b. **Those on the rock**—their house prevails to the end
 1. They stand firm—persevere—not because they are naturally strong
 - But because Christ’s own faith/words have preserved them
 2. He knows us because we have identified with him
 - Not just with lip-service—but by faith that expresses itself with obedience
 3. He acknowledges us as part of His family
 - **Mk 3:35**—*whoever does God’s will is my brother and my sister and mother*
- c. **Those on sand**—their house collapses in the end
 1. Weakened because they do not rely on Christ’s words—but on shifting sands
 - Self-confidence, human works, worldly wisdom, prosperity and popularity
 2. They do ‘fall’ away—**Heb 6**—because they never anchor themselves to Christ’s words
 3. He will not recognize them—because they never identified with Him and His words
 4. **Justin Martyr said—Those found not living as Jesus taught are not Christians**

C. CONSEQUENCES

1. THOSE WHO HEAR AND OBEY CHRIST

- Will be strengthened by adversity—grow in faith—and persevere
- They will not fall—but continue standing in the judgment

2. THOSE WHO HEAR BUT DISOBEY CHRIST

- Do not truly believe—they will weaken and not persevere
- They will fall with a resounding crash (aorist)—and not stand in the judgment

3. HEARING ONLY—WITHOUT A WORKING FAITH—DOES NOT SAVE

- This is **superficial** discipleship—not genuine repentance
- It does not trust Christ and His words to the point of obedience
- This kind of ‘faith’ does not justify one before God

Rom 2:13—*For it is not the hearers of the Law who are just before God, but the doers of the Law will be justified*

- **Superficial discipleship** is bankrupt—it ends in total collapse and disaster

VII. APPLICATION

1. IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO ADMIRE JESUS’ SERMON—WE MUST OBEY IT

2. TRUE AND FAITHFUL DISCIPLES—ARE WISE BUILDERS

- They do not ignore** or forget Jesus’ words—or substitute their own for them
 - They **preserve** Jesus’ teaching and example faithfully
- They do not just memorize** and repeat His sayings
 - But are **transformed** by them to become obedient
- They do not merely theorize** and argue about Jesus’ words—theological debate
 - But put into **practice** what they learn from Him
- They do not mindlessly** put Jesus’ words into **legalistic** practice—without understanding
 - But are **led by the Holy Spirit** to apply them properly—in Spirit and in Truth

3. WHEN WE BUILD OUR HOUSE ON CHRIST’S WORDS

- We do not just hear—believe—and confess—a set of orthodox doctrines
 - The Pharisees did this with the Law
- Instead
 - We make a genuine commitment to accept and follow Christ
 - To follow His example—in doing the Father’s will
 - And obey His instructions—which show us how to do that

- c. Wise builders become totally dedicated—consecrated
 - To letting Christ and His words reform and reshape us into the image of the Father
 - So we can please the Father—by becoming who He created us to be
 - And fulfill Jesus' command

Mt 5:48—*Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect*

VIII. INVITATION

TAKE MY LIFE, AND LET IT BE

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee.
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in endless praise.

Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love.
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

Take my voice and let me sing,
Always, only for my King.
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold.
Take my intellect and use
Every pow'r as Thou shalt choose.

Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine.
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.