

TWO MEN AND THEIR HOUSES

Matthew 7:24-27

Intro: We come today to the end of our Lord's Sermon on the Mount. I am going to take one more Sunday on Matthew, chapter 7, the last two verses, but, as you can plainly see, the message itself ends with verse 27. In the last two verses Matthew simply and importantly records the great astonishment which the people experienced as they listened to the words of the greatest Teacher Who has ever lived. But for today we want to look at this parable (because that is what it is) of two men who each built a house. The Lord had a wonderful way of bringing out the greatest truths by telling a simple story.

The Lord was finishing His message. The number *two* plays a large part in what the Lord had said, and said here, in concluding His message. For example, in verses 13 and 14, the Lord spoke of two gates and two ways. There was a wide gate and a narrow gate. The wide gate lead to a broad way, and the narrow gate led to a narrow way. The end of the broad way was destruction; the end of the narrow way was life.

In verses 15 through 20 the Lord spoke of how you could distinguish between a true prophet, and a false prophet. And he likened them to two tree – one which would bring forth good fruit, and the other which would bring forth bad fruit. And He emphasized that a good tree brings forth good fruit, and that it cannot bring for bad fruit. But He also made the point that a bad tree brings for bad fruit, and that it is utterly incapable of bringing for good fruit. So everything here is in terms of two's.

In the verses we considered last Lord's day, verses 21 through 23, we learned again about two different kinds of people – those who will enter the kingdom of heaven, and those who will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

Today, in coming to these final words of the Lord's message, we have two men, two houses, and two results.

This emphasis on the number *two* indicates that we do not have a lot of alternatives. In reality there are only two whereas in one of them there might be a number of choices. But as far as the way people live, there are only two choices: on is the right way; the other is the wrong way. In the wrong way there may be many different choices that can be made, but they are all wrong! In each case that the Lord has portrayed of the right way, there is just one way – and that truth is emphasized again in the parable which we are about to consider.

Let us notice, first,

I. THE CLASS OF PEOPLE ABOUT WHOM THE LORD WAS SPEAKING.

You see this at the beginning of verse 24 and again at the beginning of verse 26. Verse 24 begins, “Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine ... “ Verse 26 begins, “And every one that heareth these sayings of mine ... “ So the Lord was making the application first of all to the people who had heard what He had been saying, the words recorded for us from the first of chapter 5 to this point in chapter 7. *They had all been hearing what the Lord had been saying.* Let us think about this for a moment – about hearing the words of the Lord.

We are constantly hearing things, aren't we? And it has been that way since we were born. During political campaigns we hear a lot of propaganda that we get sick of before the election, and only time will tell if what we are hearing is the truth, or not the truth. We in growing up have been influenced by many people whose words we have heard. This includes our parents, our teachers, our friends. There is another way that we hear words, but in a different sense, and that is when we read books. Reading the right kind of books can be very, very profitable for us, but reading the wrong kind of books can be very damaging. Even pictures often convey a message to us. In one way or another, from birth to death, we are always hearing, always receiving messages -- some right, and some wrong; some good, and some bad.

But what the Lord was speaking about here is completely different, isn't it? He spoke of “these sayings of Mine.” The sayings of the Lord Jesus Christ are completely different from the sayings of anyone else. These are the sayings of the Son of God. We can also say that they are the sayings of God because we have been learning from John 17 that the very words which our Lord spoke to men were the words which the Father had given Him to speak. So, while we say that this was our Lord's Sermon on the Mount, it is just as true that word for word it was God's message delivered by His Son on the Mount. And we are able to read it and hear it and discuss it because it has been preserved for us in our Bibles. If we didn't have the Bible, we would not be able to say that we had heard these words of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now I am sure that most of you, possibly all of you who know the Lord, have perhaps many times marveled at the fact that it has been your privilege to hear the Word of God. It has been no mistake, or just something that has happened by chance, that somebody gave you a Bible. Perhaps it

was because you were born in a family where your parents knew the Lord and loved His Word, and from the very beginning of all that you remember of your childhood, you remember how your parents read to you from the Word of God, explained to you what it meant, and possibly encouraged you to memorize it, and took you to a church where you were taught the Word and where the pastor faithfully taught the Word of God.

All of us here today have heard the Lord's sayings; we have heard the Word of God. And this ought to be a matter for which we are constantly praising the Lord. And do you know one big reason why we should be praising the Lord? It is because there are millions of people in our nation and throughout our world who have not heard the Lord's sayings. God has put a moral regulator in every human heart so that we recognize that there is a God, and that there are things right and things wrong, but we have had the privilege of learning much more if we have heard the Lord's sayings, or whatever we have learned from any part of God's Word. It was a great God-given privilege that the group of disciples were enjoying that day when the Lord Jesus spoke these words. They were listening to the very Word of God. And we have the privilege of reading what those people heard, exactly what they heard. And since these are the sayings of our Lord Jesus Christ, we do not have to spend one moment questioning whether what we have heard from these three chapters are right or wrong. They can't possibly be wrong because they have come from the Lord Jesus Christ. The Lord never taught anything but the truth.

Now this ought to make us concerned about doing one thing among many others. The one thing to which I refer is that of making it possible for others to hear the Lord's words. We need to work these sayings of the Lord into our conversation with others as much as we can. One reason I like to bring as many Scriptures as I can into my messages is because it is very important for people to hear the actual words of Scripture. But how good and how gracious of God that He has made it possible for us to hear His Word, while so many people in this world do not have a Bible. Many have never seen a Bible. And many who have a Bible have never read it. But when the Lord said, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine," we can say now that we are included in that group.

But now we must face the question: *What are we going to do with what we have heard?* As we read our text we see that there were:

II. TWO DIFFERENT REACTIONS THAT ARE POSSIBLE.

Verse 24 says, "Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them." Verse 26 gives the opposite reaction: "And every one that

heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not. This is the point at which the two parts of the parable go in different directions.

Some people hear the Word of God, and their lives are from that point on completely different. When others hear the Word of God, they might be interested in it at the time, but they soon forget it, and it has no effect whatever upon their lives.

When the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica, he mentioned one thing in particular that caused him great joy. And he expressed his joy in these words:

For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because, when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe (1 Thess. 2:13).

What a difference it makes when we receive the sayings of the Lord Jesus as the very Word of God! But this applies to all of the Bible. Men like Moses, and David, and Isaiah in the OT were not God like our Lord Jesus is, but they were guided by the Holy Spirit in what they wrote so that word for word they have given us God's Word. And men like Matthew and Paul and Peter were not God like the Lord Jesus is, but they were guided by the Holy Spirit in what they wrote so that word for word they, too, have given us God's Word. And when the Word of God is accepted as the Word of God, the results are amazing in transforming lives. We can only do what God wants us to do, or not do what He doesn't want us to do, if we have trusted the Lord Jesus as our Savior. But the point that the Lord was making is that the evidence that a person has really turn to the Lord, is that he (or she) will live according to the Word of God.

But what do we find next? The Lord gives us:

III. A DESCRIPTION OF THESE TWO MEN.

The one who does what the Lord says is likened unto "a wise man." The one who does not do what the Lord says is "likened unto a foolish man." Here we have God's description of what a truly wise person is, and what a truly foolish person is. It is wonderful to have been blessed by God with a keen mind, with a high I.Q., and be able to make good S.A.T. scores and make high marks in exams so that companies are waiting for you to hire you when you finish school. But you know that God does not measure wisdom that way. Because a person can be very brilliant, but if he hears the Word of God, and does not do the will of God, God says that he is foolish. And there are going to be a lot of smart, foolish people in hell. But there will also be many smart wise people in heaven. But no one will

be there because of their natural ability. A wise person in God's sight is one who does His will; a fool, one who does not do His will.

Now we move on to another point. And this has to do with:

IV. THE TWO HOUSES.

The houses must represent the lives of the two men. Each can be very presentable from the outside. The difference between the two is the foundation upon which they are built. And you will notice that the Lord spoke of these houses as being built by the men who would inhabit them. The wise man built his house upon a rock; the foolish man built his house upon the sand. At the time they were constructed, it would appear to be much easier to build upon the sand, rather than to take the time and all of the hard work to dig down to find rock upon which to lay the foundation. But this is the main difference that the Lord sought to bring out in the parable.

Obviously the "rock" would refer to the Word of God, doing what God tells us to do in His Word. But since the commandments of Scripture are what God is using in our lives to make us like the Lord Jesus. And so the "rock" could also speak of Christ. The Apostle Paul said in 1 Cor. 3:11,

For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

It certainly can be said that everybody is building his house, but the Lord in this parable was speaking about those who had heard His sayings. And so we must limit our interpretation to those who have heard the teaching of the Lord. When we live according to the sayings of the Lord, doing His will, it is like building our houses, our lives, on a rock. But to hear the Lord's sayings, and not do His will, is like building a house on the sand with actually *no foundation*. Unfortunately there are many people who are doing just this. The Word of God has no place in their lives, nor does God, nor does the Lord Jesus Christ. And this is the real tragedy! The opportunity to hear the Word carries with it great responsibilities on our part. It does not mean that we are capable of obeying the Lord in our own strength, but we are responsible to look to the Lord to make us willing to do His will, and then to enable us to do it.

Finally, we come to:

V. THE TESTINGS.

Be sure to notice that the house, the life, the character of every person,

whether wise or foolish, is going to be tested. And they are described by our Lord in this parable by the same words for each person, the wise man and the foolish man. They are described as “rain,” “floods,” and “wind.” They come to every person.

It is known that in that part of the world storms can arise very quickly, and with very little or no notice. When we were in Israel and on the sea of Galilee, we were told that you could start out from the shore on a warm, sunny day, but before you reach the other side you could be caught by a terrible storm, and that sometimes the wind would cause huge waves on water that had before looked like a sea of glass. It can come in the form of some temptation. Or it might be persecution in some form, or sickness, or even the prospect of death. Often it can be a prolonged time of testing where our faith is tried, as with Abraham who waited for at least twenty-five years before Isaac was born. Or as it came to Jacob when he was forced to leave home because of his own deceit. Or it can be like Joseph who was sold by his brothers into Egyptian slavery. Or think of how Moses was tried when he came to the Red Sea with the Egyptian army in pursuit of the children of Israel. The children of Israel were tried time and time again as they went through the desert on the way to Canaan. We have been reading Jeremiah who faithfully preached the Word of God, and always got into trouble because of it. What about Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego who were put in the fiery furnace, or Daniel in the lions' den? Think of the severe trial it was for our Lord's followers when He was arrested, and then crucified. And what about Paul's thorn in the flesh, and then his imprisonments. The story of the Lord's people is a story of rain, and floods, and wind. In such times we can only stand if we are firmly founded upon the rock of the Word of God and upon the Rock, our Lord Jesus Christ.

But for the foolish man who heard the sayings of the Lord, but failed to bring His life in line with the Word of God, “great” was his fall! With the wise man, his house stood because it was founded upon a rock.

One thing about the foundation of a house that we all recognize, is that it is not prominent like the superstructure of the house. In fact, with some houses, the foundation is barely seen. But it is the foundation which determines how the house will be able to take rain and floods and wind. Just so, in our lives, the foundation that is laid is scarcely seen by others. It has to do with what is going on in our lives privately before the Lord. One thing about the foundation of our lives that differs from ordinary foundations, is that the foundation of our lives can become stronger and stronger the stronger our obedience is, and the stronger our fellowship with the Lord is.

Concl: And so the Lord came to the end of His message. What a privilege and blessing it was to hear the sayings of the Lord Jesus! How profitable it would be for me and for you if next Sunday we would start at the beginning of chapter 5 and go through this whole message again! I am sure that there is much that I need to hear again, and perhaps you would say the same thing for yourself.

Years later James would write,

- 19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:
20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.
21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness [the NASB says, “and all that remains of wickedness], and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.
22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.
23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:
24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.
25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed (James 1:19-25).

We all are guilty to some extent of hearing, and promptly forgetting. But what we need to do is to hear, *and apply the Word to our lives immediately*. This is what will strengthen our lives, so that when the rain comes, followed by floods, and then made worse by the winds of adversity, we may be shaken, but we will not fall because our lives have been founded upon the rock.

There is probably no greater need that any of us has than the need to obey the Lord each time after either through reading, or hearing it from someone else, our hearts have been exposed to the Word of God. And by the way, this is a great reason for reading the Word daily, and often for reading the same portions over and over until the truth of the Word gets into our hearts.

Let us not be forgetful hearers, but may we seek the grace of God that even the things which we have heard today may be used by the Lord to make us more like the Lord wants us to be. Christ-likeness is only possible through obedience to the Word of God.