

TWO HOUSES – WHICH ARE YOU BUILDING?

Matthew 7:24-29

Intro: Charles Simeon said regarding these final words in this amazing Sermon on the Mount, “Out blessed Lord ... shows us how we should apply our subjects to the hearts and consciences of our hearers” (*Expository Outlines on the Whole Bible*, Vol. 11, p. 280). He introduced his application with the word, “Therefore.” This is actually the fourteenth time that He said “therefore” in his message, but this is the concluding one. He made other applications as He went along, but this is the one that includes all of the others. And his application was in the form of a parable regarding two men who built two houses with two results. One man was called “wise”; the other was called “foolish. And these designations were given, not on the basis of what they built, *but where they built!*”

Almost everybody likes a story. Even little children before they can read, if someone has read to them, will often say, especially at bedtime when they may be stalling for time, “Read me a story,” or “tell me a story.” The Lord made us the way we are, and so He applied all that He had been saying with a story. It was short, but it was clear. And, it was very, very important. The Lord was not in the entertainment business. He was a Teacher, a Master Teacher. No one ever spoke like He did. And, if you will look down at the last two verses of this chapter, you will see that Matthew recorded their astonishment at the Lord’s teaching because there was power, there was authority, in the teaching of the Lord. The people were used to listening to “the scribes,” but there was something very compelling about the teaching of the Lord which the people could not set aside.

Luke tells us about a time when the Lord was in Capernaum where He taught the people on several Sabbath days, probably in the synagogue, and the people responded the same way. Luke wrote,

And they were astonished at His doctrine: for His Word was with power (Luke 4:32).

In both of these instances it means that the people were greatly impressed, but they were convinced that what the Lord had been teaching was right. His teaching required a response.

It is said concerning the preaching of Stephen, one of the original deacons, that the people to whom he spoke in Jerusalem, that “they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spoke” (Acts

6:10). They hated what he was teaching, but in their hearts they knew that he was speaking the truth. There is an awesome power, a convincing authority, to the Word of God. And it is often displayed when the servants of the Lord speak the Word under the power of the Holy Spirit. Anyone who turns away from the Word of God to teach the words of mere men, is making a fatal mistake. It is no wonder that the Apostle Paul exhorted Timothy to “preach the Word” (2 Tim. 4:2). We are not to debate it. We are not just to discuss it. We are to preach it, proclaim it, make sure that this is what people are hearing from us. Hebrews 4:12 tells us,

12 For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

After Peter preached the Word on the Day of Pentecost following the ascension of our Lord, it is recorded in the book of Acts, chapter 2 and verse 37,

Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?

That is what happened when the Lord taught. People did not always agree with Him, especially the Jewish leaders, but they could not deny that He was teaching the truth. The Word, under the blessing of God, carries with it the power to convince and to convict. That is why when you go to church, you should not go where you are going to listen to a lot of humanistic psychology, or humanistic philosophy. Go where you can hear the Word of God, and where the main purpose in everything that is done, is the teaching of God’s Word. The greatest instrument we have to win the hearts of people, is not contemporary music. It is not stories designed to entertain and make people laugh. The greatest instrument of blessing which we have is the Word of God, preached in the power of the Holy Spirit.

That is what people heard from the lips of our dear Savior. In our opposition with Satan, we are to take “the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God” (Eph. 6:17), backing it up with *all kinds of prayer*.

Now the Lord knew that the people who had been listening to Him were ready to hear what He said in these concluding verses. And so He said for the final time in this message, “Therefore ...”

I hope that you are keeping in mind how the Lord taught in two's as He brought His message to a conclusion:

- 1) Two gates.
- 2) Two ways.
- 3) Two destinations – all in verses 13 and 14.
- 4) Good trees.
- 5) Corrupt trees – both in verse 15-20.

And then we have the difference between those who are all *talk* as compared with those who talk and *walk*! *And now in the final verses we have a wise man and a foolish man with the two houses they built, but with two different results.* So let us look now at the parable.

Verses 24 and 25 have to do with the wise man. Verses 25 and 27 tell us about the foolish man. There are important similarities between the two men, but there are also very significant differences which mark the difference between being truly wise, on the one hand, and foolish, on the other. Let's begin with verse 24.

I. THE WISE MAN (Matt. 7:24-25).

You will notice that the Lord is speaking in these verses about people and their response to the Word of God.

We hear about this first man that:

A. He heard what the Lord called “these sayings of mine” (Matt. 7:24a).

This included, in the first place, those disciples to whom the Lord primarily directed His words, but also the people who joined them as He was teaching. But these words apply also to everyone who has read them, or who has heard them taught. There are those who have not heard the Word, who have never read the Bible, who never show any interest in it. But our Lord was speaking of those who have heard the Word. Hearing carries with it a tremendous responsibility. And everybody who hears the Word is made to feel their responsibility. It is an act of divine providence when anyone hears the Word. And so it places the people who hear in a position of responsibility for what they hear. And the more we hear, or the more we read of the Word, the greater is our responsibility. Hearing the Word is what the writer of Psalm 119 called “the entrance of Thy Words giveth light; it giveth understanding to the simple” (Psa. 119:130).

How thankful we should be that we have heard the Word of God! But let us remember that the Lord holds us responsible for what we have heard. If God has given you ears to hear, praise Him! But, as our parable clearly teaches, we need to give special attention to what we do with it.

What did this first man do with the Lord's teaching?

B. He "doeth it."

I have expressed it just like it is in our Authorized Version. The verb in the original is a present active indicative which speaks of progressive, continuous action. He obeyed the Word. He believed the Word and he believed in the Lord. And he also continued to obey the Lord and to trust the Lord. His life was completely changed. He became a new creature. He ceased living a life of sin, and began living and continued to live a life that was pleasing to God.

But how did the Lord describe him? He called him "a wise man." If you want to see how the Bible describes wisdom, read the book of Proverbs, for starters the first nine chapters, but then read on to the end. Read Ecclesiastes and the Song of Solomon. And while you are reading those books read the Psalms. "A wise man" according to God's definition does not mean that you have a lot of academic letters after your name. A wise man is a man who hears the Word of God, and *does* it! He may be a Ph. D., but a Ph. D. is not what makes you necessarily wise. It is your relationship to God's Word, that you know it and believe it and obey it and grow constantly in your understanding of it, that makes you wise before God.

What further way did the Lord describe the wise man?

He "built his house upon a rock." I think that it can be said that a house is no better than the foundation upon which it is built, and there is no better foundation than solid rock. I have known of homes where the contractor dug down until he came to solid rock, and there he laid the foundation of the house he was to build. The house speaks of the place where this man lived, and so it represents *his life*! But how can we explain the rock?

In the song which Moses taught the children of Israel to sing, this is what he said in Deut. 32:3-4:

3 Because I will publish the name of the LORD: ascribe ye

greatness unto our God.

4 *He is the Rock*, his work is perfect: for all his ways are judgment: a God of truth and without iniquity, just and right is he. So to build upon a rock is to build upon God.

And then we have that passage in 1 Corinthians 10 in which Paul was referring to the experiences of the children of Israel as they traveled through the desert from Egypt to Canaan. In referring to how God provided water for the people, he said this about the people in 1 Cor 10:4

4 And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.

So God is called a Rock, and Christ is called a Rock.

There are many passages in the Psalms which speak of God as the Rock of His people because of His unfailling and inexhaustible strength. But who can forget Peter's great confession of Christ which we find in Matt. 16:16-18. The Lord had been asking His disciples what people were saying about Him, and then He asked the disciples what they believed about Him. This was the response He got from Peter:

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter (Πέτρος), and upon this rock (πέτρα) I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

This was a play on words which the Lord was using, but it seems that what He was saying, was not that the church would be built upon Peter, but that it would be built upon the confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. We can add to this what Paul said in 1 Corinthians about Christ as the only foundation of His people. Cf. 1 Cor. 3:10-11:

10 According to the grace of God which is given unto me, as a wise masterbuilder, I have laid the foundation, and another buildeth thereon. But let every man take heed how he buildeth thereupon.

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

And since all of this comes to us through the Word of God, it is fitting that we speak of the Word of God as the solid foundation upon which we can build our lives.

But then what happened? As the weather tests every house that has ever been built, so the wise man's house was tested. And evidently the wise man anticipated what was coming.

C. The testing time (Matt. 7:25).

“The rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not.” Why? “For it was founded upon a rock.”

Upon every life the rain descends. Upon every life there are times when the floods come, and the winds blow and beat upon the house. And often the beating lasts and lasts and lasts. But what happens? The beating can often be very severe, but the house build upon the rock stood the testing! What did it stand? Just because “it was founded upon a rock.”

Do you see the application, and how important it is for us always to follow our hearing the Word with prompt obedience to the Word? Don't miss the message that the Lord was teaching. And don't forget the application that we need to make. There is plenty of truth here for us to meditate upon.

So much for the wise man, what about the foolish man?

II. THE FOOLISH MAN (Matt. 7:26-27).

Undoubtedly there were two men in the crowd that the Lord had been teaching, who fell into these two categories—the wise man and the foolish. We know one who was there, and who was foolish. His name was Judas Iscariot.

But what about the foolish man? What made him foolish?

A. He likewise heard what the wise man heard, the teaching of our Lord (Matt. 7:26a).

He heard exactly what the wise man heard, the same truth from the same marvelous Teacher. But what did he do about the teaching?

B. “He doeth them not” (Matt. 7:26m).

He may have shown interest at the time, but that is where it all ended. He was impressed with the truth that he heard, and the authority with which the Lord spoke convinced him that those “sayings” were true. But that is as far as the message got with him.

What did he do? He went on building his house. Everyone does. And it may have looked a great deal like the wise man’s house. Maybe the foolish man tried to make it just like the wise man’s house. But there was one major and tragic difference: he “built his house upon the sand.” His house may have been quite close to the wise man’s house, but it was on sand, not rock!

Well, he didn’t realize what a terrible mistake he had made until the same rain descended upon his house that descended upon the wise man’s house. And the rains create floods. The wind only made matters worse as it beat upon the house, and finally it proved to be too much for all that the foolish man had put into his house, and it came crashing down—a total loss!

At this point the Sermon on the Mount ended. The Lord said no more. He did not need to say any more. The meaning was very, very clear, but ominous.

Such is the life that is lived without God. It ends in eternal ruin. There is no insurance that will compensate for such a mistake. The loss can never be repaired. The sand includes everything that people build their lives upon except God and His Word.

Concl: We hear a lot these days from people who want to rid our society of any reference to God and any reference to God on the basis of what they foolishly and falsely claim is the meaning of church and state. They are building their lives upon the sand, and they want everybody else to do the same. They want to get rid of everybody who insists on building upon God the Rock, and Jesus Christ the Rock, and the Rock-like truth of the Word of God.

I hope that we don’t have any foolish people here this morning. We can be very wise in the eyes of men, but fools in God’s sight. The Lord Jesus came to earth and God has given us His Word so that people can see how and where every life needs to be built. If we fail to act upon what we have heard, the fault is ours, not God’s, but the price is tragic beyond words.