

Jesus' Greatest Hits

The Two Foundations

Part 22 - December 16, 2007

[VIDEO: FRIDAY CREEK]

Have you ever been caught in a storm, unprepared? No umbrella. No coat. How miserable! In the parable of The Two Foundations, Jesus tells about a man who built his house on the sand, and a man who built on the rock. And what we learn is that although the storms of life are inevitable - being prepared for them is a choice.

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash. - *Matthew 7:24-27 NIV*



Israel is filled with sandy valleys and dry river beds called *wadis* ("Wadi" means "washes"). They're arid and dry most of the year, but they're subject to violent rains and sudden floods. People built near *wadis* because of sub-surface water for wells.



In Dubai (in the United Arab Emirates), on the Persian Gulf, there's a: Wild *Wadi* Water Park¹. They even have something called the "Wadi Wash" that creates a flash-flood every 60 minutes!

If you wanted to locate near a wadi, you basically had two choices:

- A. Pitch your tent on the smooth, level, soft sand.
- B. Dig your foundation in the hard, rocky hillside.



People weren't stupid (they knew the floods would come) but they were *foolish* and *lazy*. They'd set up camp on the sand and say, "We'll dig that foundation *tomorrow*; when the sun's not so hot."

Jesus had just finished His "Sermon on the Mount" wherein He gives instruction after instruction concerning Kingdom living.

¹ www.wildwadi.com

- We are the salt of the earth, and a light to the world.
- Let your “Yes” be “Yes,” and your “No” be “No”.
- Adultery and murder are just as evil in our *thought life*.
- Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.
- If someone strikes you on the cheek, turn to him the other.
- Do not do your acts of righteousness to be seen by men.
- Forgive others their sins; store up treasure in Heaven.
- Do not condemn; first take the log out of your own eye.

And The Beatitudes, and The Lord’s Prayer, and on and on and on. And the crowds LOVED IT! They were nodding their heads, and they were shouting, “Amen!” But there was a *frustration* in Jesus’ heart; He knew that for many of these head nodding, “Amen” shouting fans and admirers, His teaching would have no *radical* impact in their lives.

These are the “words” He was talking about when he said:

Therefore everyone who **hears these words of mine** and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. - *Matthew 7:24 NIV*

It’s not enough to believe, we must obey. It’s going to take hard work and effort. You have to *dig deep*! In Luke’s account he adds four words:

He is like a man building a house, **who dug down deep** and laid the foundation on rock. - *Luke 6:48 NIV*

If we want to stand firmly on the rock – on Christ – we have to get beyond *surface level* Christianity. Not just church attendance, but accountability! Dig! Not just Bible reading, but discovering truths! Dig! Not just belief, but faith reflected in action! Dig! Not just lip service, but heart-felt obedience! Dig!

If you want a dynamic, passionate walk with Christ that can face and conquer the spiritual, emotional, and physical torrents that flash-flood our lives, you must put His words into *practice*.



Have you ever built a sand castle on the beach? It doesn’t take long for the waves to wash them away because they’re not *fortified*; they’re not built to *withstand*; therefore they rapidly erode. If we build on the surface we’ll be washed away.

I read about a schoolteacher who lost her life savings in a silly business scam. And when she reported it to the Better Business Bureau they asked why she hadn’t come to them first. She said, “I was afraid you’d tell me not to do it.” There are many believers who will not pursue Christ, because they’re afraid they’ll be told not to do what they want to do.

They aren't stupid – they know the floods will come – they're foolish and lazy. They're bent on doing it, their minds are closed, and it doesn't matter what the consequences are. But when the house collapses, they still get mad at *God!*

Remember the trailer park (next to the Skagit River bridge in Mount Vernon), that flooded every time the river rose? They finally had to ban people from living there!

We must beware of a gospel of addition without subtraction; the belief that I can add Jesus to my life without subtracting sin!

In the verses immediately before this parable, Jesus said:

Not everyone who says to me, "Lord, Lord," will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, "Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?" Then I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you." – *Matthew 7:21-23 NIV*

Five things jump out of this passage:

1. They say, "Lord, Lord"; they called themselves disciples.
2. There are "Many" of this type of believer.
3. They both spoke and acted like faithful followers.
4. And yet, they "never knew" Jesus!



And he tells us there's just one type admitted into Heaven:

"Only he who does the will of my Father"

Thankfully, God has put His will into words, and God has put His Words in our hands.

What does it mean to "know" the Lord?

We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. The man who says, "I know him," but does not do what he commands is a liar ... - *1 John 2:3-4 NIV*

What is this "knowledge" (that John and Jesus both refer to), that's *impossible* to possess if you walk in disobedience? There's a big clue in 1 John 4:16:

We know and rely on the love God has for us. - 1 John 4:16a NIV

To know God's love is to rely on God's love. For John, it's unthinkable that a person could know the love of God and not trust/rely on the love of God. *Not* to trust it means I don't really think that it *is* love!

So, when the Lord commands you to do something, and you ignore it or go against it, John can only conclude one thing: You don't believe that He *is* love ... and therefore you don't know Him!

If you believed that He was love, then you'd believe that all His commandments were the very best thing for you (the loving counsel of an all-wise Father), and you'd gladly obey them.

The reason behind my disobedience - the reason I sometimes chose the sand over the rock - is because in that moment I believe that God wants to withhold from me the happiness I crave. My disobedience is proof that I don't know Him as I should. So, I reexamine my foundation, and I confess my "cracks", and I recommit to digging ever deeper into His Word as my only *anchor*.

To realize the worth of the anchor you need to feel the storm! It's interesting that verse 25a and verse 27a are identical:

The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house ... - *Matthew 7:25a & 7:27a NIV*



Same storm for the house on the rock, as well as the sand. Everyone faces the storms. When the storm beats against *your* house, *your* family, *your* hopes, *your* plans, are you thrown from your foundation? Sometimes He calms the storm ... sometimes He calms the believer.



But, generally speaking, every storm provides us with an opportunity to *prove* what we believe. The storms reveal the foundation I've chosen.

We can't be perfect, but we can be obedient! And part of obedience is acknowledging when we fall short, and recognizing our need for God's grace and mercy.

We are called to *know* Jesus as both Lord AND Savior. This means:

- A. Surrendering daily to His authority (as *Lord*).
- B. Depending daily on His deliverance (as *Savior*).

Let's see how well you've been listening; answer *true* or *false* when I ask the questions. In this passage, we've learned that:

1. We must not only believe the Word, we must obey the Word.
2. We cannot add Christ without subtracting sin.
3. Hard times never come to those who build on the rock.
4. When the storm hits, you're stuck with what you've built.