

Puzzling Parables

The Foolish Builder

Part 2 – November 1, 2015



We're on the hill! Above the sea. Theology 101 is about to *end* for 11 young men, and one betrayer. And then, the most profound upheaval these boys could ever attempt to imagine will *begin*.



I received my early theological training from Doris Reichert, who led from the piano, in the basement of Burlington Lutheran when I was five.

Ever sing: *"The wise man built his house upon the rock"?*

"Oh, the rain came down and the floods came up; the rain came down and the floods came up; the rain came down and the floods came up ..."



"... And the wise man's house ... stood firm."

"... And the foolish man's house ... went splat!"

Anybody know what a "wadi" is?



It's a sandy gully or valley. And, sometimes wadis are *enormous*. Like this one in Paran, Israel. Can you find the car and the three men?

They're on that dark triangle in the lower right corner.



The word "wadi" means "washes". Know why? When the rain comes down, violent, silent, *flash* floods come up; and wash the wadi clean.

Here's a video from a flash-flood in *that wadi* in Paran in 2010.



The man taping saw lightning, far off, the night before; and began filming just after the water suddenly stopped traffic on a clear, hot day.

In Dubai, on the Persian Gulf, there's a place called the Wild Wadi Water Park.

One attraction is the *Wadi Wash*, a 16,000 gallon flash flood.



Wadi valleys often have subterranean water, making 'em great places to build: You pitch a tent on the sand, climb a hill, dig down, and chip away at the bedrock for a base for a foundation.

And, WOW that sun's hot!



But *finally*, a long day is done. Lot'a work. Little to show.

You clean up, cool off, eat, drink, lay down in your tent on that smooth, soft sand; and, drift off to sleep and sink into slumber.

Wake up! A new day's begun.



A cool morning breeze is a'blowin' through the valley. But, that blazing sun is waiting.

And, you're faced with man's oldest dilemma:

Do I do what's easy or do I do what's right?

Those who built on the sand, in Jesus' day, weren't ignorant.

They knew whad'a wadi was. But, they were *foolish ... and lazy*.

So, they'd occasionally, half-heartedly, chip away.

Just enough to convince *themselves* that the sand is temporary.

[So, James warns them – *and us*] Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. – James 1:22 NIV

Because, sand is quick to offer justifications to sink in and stay, right up to the day "*the rain comes down and the floods come up,*" and you wake up drowning in a dwelling on a seductive bed of betraying sand.

They'd say, "*We'll dig all day ... **tomorrow** ... when the sun's not so hot.*"

But, as we *all well know*: **the sun shines on and tomorrow never comes.**

I tell you, [writes Paul] **now** is the time of God's favor, **now** is the day of salvation. – 2 Corinthians 6:2b NIV

We must act before the rain hammers down and the flood rears up.

The boys were challenged on the hill regarding false accusations, persecution, shining our light, murder of the heart, adultery of the mind, divorce, vows, revenge, turning the cheek, loving our enemies, giving generously, praying authentically, storing up treasure, serving One Master, fasting, worrying, judging, asking, seeking, knocking, and following the Son as the Lord of Lords.

And, when He was done, He looked at the boys and the crowds and said:

"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" – Luke 6:46 NIV

And, then He closes with the parable of the wadi builder.



I did a parable series eight years ago, where we video-taped me reading from a red chair in a location that went with the story. We filmed *this* parable during an icy storm in December.

I'm supposed to be caught unprepared in the rain. So, I was sprayed with water, without a coat, and filmed (for about an hour) running through the woods looking for the chair!

The final version is about 2.5 minutes.

“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



You know what else was awful? Trying to lift that chair out of the water. And, know what I learned? **You should move to higher ground before your seat is soaked!**

Anybody catch the blatant theological mistake in the video?

I didn't, until just this week. It's the *title*: “*The Two Foundations*” I titled this *before* I realized the value of weaving the Word.

Matthew and Luke both record this parable.

But, only Matthew tells us that the man is *foolish* and the ground is *sand*.

“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**.” – Matthew 7:26 NIV

And, it's only Luke who includes this little tidbit:

“But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground **without a foundation**.” – Luke 6:49 NIV

There's only one foundation! Paul says as much when he writes to the Corinthians.

But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. – 1 Corinthians 3:10b-11 NIV

The NIV titles this passage: *The Wise and Foolish Builders*

The NKJ titles it: *Parable of the Two Builders*

The NAS titles it: *The Two Foundations (somebody wasn't weaving!)*



There's One Foundation, and One Rock. And they're *both* Jesus.

Everything else is seductive sand and self-deception, just waiting to wadi away.

But, on Christ the solid Rock we'll stand, to the degree that we actually put His words into practice.

Some church-goers are like a person who takes piano lessons, but doesn't practice during the week, and then comes to their next session, and wonders why they're not making any music.

Luke also offers a unique tidbit about the *doer* of Jesus' words:

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

Being *doers* entails hard work, slow progress, and deep digging.

Not just mechanical confession, but Godly sorrow.

Not just half-hearted turning, but full repentance.

Not just learning the Word, but living the truth.

And, the music you'll make, forever, is phenomenal.

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law. – Matthew 7:28-29 NIV

How 'bout you? **Is He *your* Authority?**

Or, one voice out of many?

Only a dynamic walk with Jesus can offer peace and hope when the emotional, relational, and physical wadis flash-flood your life.

So, don't settle on the sand.

Move your seat to higher ground, long before it weighs you down.