

Flood Walls

Preparing for the Storms of Life

November 21, 2021

Today we're talking about preparing for the storms of life.

And that means, **choosing to do what's right over what's easy!**



So: **Are you ready for the flood?** I am. *Now.* Whereas, Shar and I *slept* through a 2:00 a.m. *evacuation warning.* Our neighbor said the police were pounding on our door! So, having slept through it, I rolled out of bed, made coffee, and strolled onto the back deck – in the dark – clueless that we were already landlocked. So I relaxed in the hot tub ... till I heard what sounded like a broken water pipe. So I got out, wrapped a towel around me – still in the dark – trying to find the sound. Found it! A few feet behind our little barn is a *huge* retention pond that's *never* had standing water in 30 years. It was full and rapidly rising from a storm drain geyser!



Funny, the motivation of rising water! Clean-the-cluttered-barn has been on my to-do list for a *year.* Took about 15 *minutes,* including *dressing!* So, after getting caught with my pants down, I had to use Jesus' parable about anticipating the flood.



On the hillside above the sea of Galilee, Jesus delivered one of His best-known comparables, which, I'm pretty sure was my *earliest* theological training ... via my godmother Doris, who led children's music in the basement of Burlington Lutheran, when I was five. Ever sing: "*The wise man built his house upon the rock*"? Well, the rains came down and the floods came up, and **the wise man's house stood firm ... but the foolish man's house went splat!**"



Multitudes were flocking to Jesus to behold and to hear and be healed; and they were praising Him and shouting "Amen!" as He bestowed the single largest deposit of classic "Jesus wisdom" in the Bible! (Mt 5-7) That's what's playing in the *restrooms.*

And though He's at the height of His popularity, He knows that **for many, if not most, that day, His deeply profound insights and warnings will have no radical nor lasting impact.**

So He ends with a sobering question and a flood warning.

Why do you call Me, "Lord, Lord," and do not *do* what I say? [Fair question.] I will show you [who merely listen, and do not do] what he is *like* who comes to Me and *hears* My words and *puts* them into *practice.* – Luke 6:46-47 NIV



And He tells about the wadi builder. Know what a wadi is? A big, dry, sandy gully that's actually a riverbed; sometimes they're *enormous*. See the car? Here it is! Golly, wha'da wadi gully! And when the rains come down, maybe *miles* away, a silent, violent, flashflood comes up.



wadi means Washes, because it washes everything and *everyone*, in its path, away. There's a waterpark in Dubai, called the Wild Wadi. And one of the attractions is a 16,000 gallon flash flood called the "Wadi Wash".



So why would anyone wanna build in a wadi?! *Well ... well ...* a well. Wadis have sub-surface water. Plus, after a long, hot day of digging and pickaxing on the rocky hillside, you get to sleep on the smooth, soft, sand. Cool breeze. Drifting off. And *wake up!* That blazin' sun is a'waitin'. And you're faced with mankind's oldest dilemma: **Do what's easy or do what's right?** Those who chose to stay on the sand weren't ignorant, just foolish.



They knew what a wadi was. But, **once we settle on sand, it's easy to rationalize staying.** "I'll dig *later*; when the sun's not so *hot*." And you *do occasionally*, half-heartedly, chip away; **just enough to convince yourself the sand is temporary.** But ever notice how a temporary fix often becomes a permanent, vastly *substandard*, solution? Thank you duct tape!



Problem with a wadi is, like a lot of things in life, it really isn't a *big deal ... till it is*. We get lulled into laziness because devastating things, whether emotional, relational, or physical, don't happen *that* often. But when they do, the unprepared are underwater. So Jesus said:

Everyone who hears these words of Mine and puts them into practice is like a *wise* man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation *and* built his house on the *rock*. [I loved Noah's D.I.G.G. bracelet last Sunday: Does It Glorify God?] The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, *and* When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built because it had its foundation *on the rock*. But the one who hears My words and does not put them into practice is like a *foolish* man who built *his* house on *sand* without a foundation. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and the *moment* the *torrent* struck *that* house, it fell it collapsed with a great crash and its destruction was complete. – Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6:46-49 NIV

So, what foundational principle or relational reality are you foolishly *choosing* to ignore and failing to DIGG? I'm spelling that, D-I-G-G. Jesus' brother James has his own flood warning, saying:

Do not [settle for what's easy and] *merely listen* to the *Word*, and so deceive yourselves [into thinking you're digging]. Do [what's right, and do] what it says. – James 1:22 NIV

'Cause the sun's *always* hot and sand is quick to tempt; so doers gotta dig in, dig down, and do!

For no other *foundation* can *anyone* lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. – 1 Corinthians 3:11 NKJ

I believe Jesus based His parable on **Ezekiel 13 and Isaiah 28**, where God commands the Son of Man to confront **the foolish who fail to establish their faith on His Word**; and assume *their* thoughts are like *His*, and so fall when the storms of life reveal their foundation. Saying:

“Son of man, prophesy against ... those who prophesy out of their own heart, **[imagination]** ‘Hear the *Word of the Lord!* ... Woe to the *foolish* ... who follow their *own spirit* and have *seen nothing!* **[in His Word]** ... yet they hope that the word **[they’ve assumed]** may be confirmed. ... You say, “The Lord says,” but I have not spoken. **[Where’s your Scripture?]** ... *you have spoken nonsense* and envisioned *lies* ... **[it’s like]** one builds a wall, and they plaster it with *untempered* **[weak and soft]** mortar ... [Therefore] I will cause a stormy wind to break forth ... and there shall be a flooding rain ... and great hailstones ... So I will break down the **[self-willed]** wall you have plastered with *untempered* mortar ... so that *its foundation* will be *uncovered*” – Ezekiel 13:2-14 NKJ

Behold, the Lord has a mighty and strong One, *like* a tempest of hail and a destroying storm, *like* a flood of mighty waters overflowing ... and whom will He make to understand the message? Those just weaned from milk? ... Therefore *hear* the Word of the Lord, you scornful men, who ... [said] “We have made *lies our* refuge, and under *falsehood* we have *hidden* ourselves.” Therefore thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I lay in Zion a *stone* for a *foundation*, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a *sure foundation* ... the hail will sweep away the refuge of *lies*, and the waters will overflow the hiding place. – Isaiah 28:2-17 NKJ

As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the Word, that you may grow ... Coming to Him as to a living stone ... chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, **[with a wall of His will on the Rock of His Word]** – 1 Peter 2:2-5 NKJ



There’s only **One Foundation** and **One Rock**; and their one name is Jesus. Everything else is the **seductive sand of self-deceit and untempered half-truths**, just waiting to wadi away. So if you suddenly find your *family*, or *marriage*, or *faith* on the rocks ... it’s probably been resting on the sand.



If you don’t want that wadi to wash you away when it comes, you gotta keep digging! You gotta go deep! **Get beyond “sandy” Christianity and surface level faith.**



Don’t *settle* for **learning** it, *build* on **living** it. **DIGG?** Don’t *settle* for **confession**, *build* on **conviction**. **DIGG?** Don’t *settle* for **attendance**, *build* on **accountability**. **DIGG?** On Christ the solid Rock – His will and His Word – we’ll stand, because *He’s* the *Storm* against sin, and our *refuge* from *wrath!*

We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. – Hebrews 6:19 NIV

To the degree, that is, that we DIGG.

But some believers don't dig *too deep* for fear of facing what they know they don't *want to do*. So beware of foolishly **trying to add Jesus without subtracting sin**. A friend saw a truck with two bumper stickers: "WWJD" and "Follow me to Hooters". *That's* addition without subtraction. **And if our sins aren't washed away we will be.**

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. – Matthew 7:21 NIV

That's how the parable begins. But thankfully, **He's put His will into words**. And, **He's put His Words in our hands**. John, who knew Jesus *first* hand, writes that whoever dares to say:

"I know Him," but does not *do* what *He commands* is a *liar* – 1 John 2:4 NIV

Because, **to know Him is to trust Him**.

So, whenever I choose the weak but tempting walls of *my* will on the shifting sand of spiritual assumptions – over the wall of *His* will on the Rock of Salvation – I'm foolishly assuming He's unfairly withholding the soft comforts and sandy satisfaction I crave.

So John can only conclude that **those who disobey Him don't trust Him**; which means **those who don't trust Him don't know Him**; which means they're not digging.

Storms *will* come. But then, **to know the worth of an anchor, your got'a face a storm**.

Sometimes He calms the storm. And **sometimes He calms the believer**. That second scenario has far more eternal value than the first. But, either way, the storms reveal the foundation we've chosen. Because **peace isn't found in the absence of trouble, but the presence of Christ**.

So when the storm beats against *your* house, *your* family, *your* body, *your* plans, *your* dreams, **will you be sunk or secure?** Every storm tests what we've built, *and* provides us an opportunity to see to what degree we actually, really, truly, trust the Lord. And if we crumble, it's just a reminder to move from the softness of the sand to the security of the living Stone. DIGG?

When Jesus had finished saying [all] these things, [on the hill] the crowds were *amazed* at His teaching, because *He* taught as One who had *authority*, – Matthew 7:28-29 NIV

Which doesn't mean they made Him *their* authority. But, is He *yours*? **Anybody pounding on your door – or your heart – with warnings you're ignoring or simply sleeping through?**



Our flood wall in Mount Vernon worked! It held! We should be rightly proud. We prepared it quite a while ago; and I think a lot of folks were excited to see it tested. Because, **when you're sure your wall will stand, you don't have to fear the inevitable flood**.

Unlike *those* on the *sand* ... or *me* in the *hot tub*.