



Mid-Week

**Bible Study and Prayer
Wednesdays 6:45pm – 8pm**



led by: Pastor Josh Franklin, Good Hope Baptist Church (www.goodhopechurch.org and www.joshfranklin.org)

Beneath the Surface

(Genuine Believers Have a Foundation)

Matthew 7:24-29 (NKJV) [with notes]

²⁴ "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them [obeys them, acts on, practices, see Jas 1:22-25], I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat [Luke says vehemently beat] on that house [1 Cor. 10:13; Jas 1:2-3; 1 Pet 4:12;]; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

²⁶ But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand [Luke 6:48 says, "he dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock." – you could say that the foolish man was only concerned about appearance. He did not take time on the foundation.]:

²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

²⁸ And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings [the end of the first five major discourses in Matthew, all of which conclude with a similar phrase; see also 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1], that the people [crowds] were astonished at His teaching,

²⁹ for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes [teachers of the law].

Adrian Rogers, "We've got a terrible problem in the Christian world today: the problem of dropout disciples. They are collapsing Christians, famishing family members, brothers and sisters separating themselves from the family of God. They get baptized and attend church for a while, but then persecution and temptation come and they fall away. I call them Alka-Seltzer Christians. You drop them in water, they fizzle a little while, then they are gone! When they ought to be standing up, they are folding up, because they have no real foundation for their lives. When the storm comes, they are blown away."

Jesus ended His Sermon on the Mount speaking of—

- two roads: one unto life, one to destruction;
- two trees: one of fruitfulness, one of failure;
- two foundations: one to stand, one to collapse.

The easy way is attractive for several reasons, the first of which is that it is quick. The foolish person is always in a hurry. His first desire is to please himself, and he takes the shortest route to that end. In church work he wants the quick, easy solution, the one that causes the least controversy and hassle, with no consideration of how the solution may square with Scripture. He is for easy evangelism, easy believism, and easy discipleship, because they bring quick results that are simple to see and measure. He has no time for searching the Word for the right truth with which to witness, or for soul-searching or sound conviction. He sees a verbal profession, a card signed; or a prayer prayed as sufficient to bring a person to Christ. He is perfectly willing to declare a person saved without his having any awareness that he is lost.

The foolish person also likes the easy way because he is basically superficial. That which is superficial requires little planning, little effort, little care to detail, and little concern for quality or standards. The person who is superficial looks for what is pleasing rather than for what is right, for what is enjoyable rather than for what is true, for what satisfies himself rather than what satisfies God. He looks to Christianity for instant results, instant pleasure, and instant rewards. He cares much about spiritual "highs" but nothing about spiritual "depths."

*The greatest problem in evangelism is not follow-up but conversion. Right follow-up is not nearly so difficult as right conversion. **Follow-up is the hardest when conversion is the easiest, because easy conversion is frequently no conversion.** It results from seed falling on rocky soil, where it springs up quickly and dies just as quickly. The unconverted are indeed hard to follow up, whereas those who have truly come to Christ are eager to learn from His Word and associate with His people. I heard of a large church that one year claimed 28,000 conversions, 9,600 baptisms, and 123 additions to the church! After reflecting on those figures, one of the church staff members decided that something was terribly wrong and decided to minister elsewhere. It is quite impossible that so many true conversions would produce so few Christians who would want to identify with their new brothers and sisters in the Lord. - MacArthur Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1985), 484ff.*

As Arthur Pink says of such people, "They bring their bodies to the house of prayer but not their souls; they worship with their mouths, but not "in spirit and in truth." They are sticklers for immersion or early morning communion, yet take no thought about keeping their hearts with all diligence. They boast of their orthodoxy; but disregard the precepts of Christ. Multitudes of professing Christians abstain from external acts of violence, yet hesitate not to rob their neighbors of a good name by spreading evil reports against them. They contribute regularly to the "pastor's salary," but shrink not from misrepresenting their goods and cheating their customers, persuading themselves that "business is business." They have more regard for the laws of man than those of God, for His fear is not before their eyes". - ibid

I. The Building and the Foundation

Our Lord says that were all building a house our lives are like a house. "Whosoever heareth these things of mine and doeth them, I will liken unto him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock."

Now, you are all building some kind of a spiritual house. I cannot live in the house that you build. You cannot live in the house I build. I am stuck with the house that I build and I will stand or fall in the house that I build. Now, our Lord here is talking about two kinds of builders. In verse 24, he talks about a wise builder who builds his house upon a rock. And in verse 26, he talks about a foolish builder who built his house upon the sand. In many ways these two builders are very much alike. He's talking about two categories of persons who have heard his Word.

Now, notice the similarities.

1. They both have the same basic purpose. They're both house builders.
2. They are both building their houses in the same basic place. Because the same storm that hit one, hit the other.
3. They probably all used the same basic plan. Remember when you build a house, there is the floor, the walls, the roof - you can have different designs, but there is the same basic plan. All saying we want to succeed in life. We have the same basic purpose, we're in the same basic place, and we have the same basic plan.

But there was a vital difference in these two. But the difference was below the surface, in the foundation. There was the rock builder first of all. In Luke 6:48, when Luke reported this, he adds that the builder dug deep and laid the foundation upon the rock. You know that a house with a good foundation can stand the storm. But then he said there was another man, this was the sand builder. Now, you can build a house more quickly if you don't bother with a foundation. And just go out to a sandy lot and begin to build. Pour the slab, or lay the joist on the ground. On the ground put down a base. Build the walls. Put the roof on. That's quicker, less costly, and your house will look just as good as your neighbor's.

To build on sand is to build on self-will, self-fulfillment, self-purpose, self-sufficiency, self-satisfaction, and self-righteousness. To build the house of one's life on the sand is to follow the ultimate deception of Satan, which is to make a person believe he is saved when he is not. - John MacArthur

Two things build a foundation: hearing and doing the Word. (See Romans 10:17 and James 1:22-25)

II. The Storm

Now, when you get saved, does that mean there are going to be no storms in your life? Storms come to every life saved or lost. Built on the rock, or built on the sand. The storm is going to show whether or not you have a foundation. That's all it's going to do. The storm is going to test your faith. ***And the faith that cannot be tested, is a faith that cannot be trusted.***

The Christian faith does not exempt one from trial, it equips them for the trial. As Chuck Colson put it, God does not promise to take us out of the fire but promises to get into the fire with us. Don't get the idea that simply when you get saved, that there's going to be no more trouble, no more difficulty, the storms are going to come. And if you get your theology from circumstances rather than from the Word of God, you're going to get the idea that God doesn't love you. Let me tell you friend, storms are going to come. There's going to be sickness, there's going to be suffering, there's going to be persecution, there's going to be heartache, there's going to be difficulty, but these things cannot separate a man whose life is built on the rock. See Romans 8:35.

This means that YOU will not fall. Such people will not crack up in the storms of life. They will not go to pieces. They will not give up their faith. They will not panic and shake their fists at God for allowing the trial. When Satan tries us, we are to stand, says Paul. Four times he uses the word stand in his classic paragraph on spiritual warfare (Eph. 6:10-18). "Stand your ground" (v. 13). When you stand, you don't fall. You don't trip. You don't go backward. You don't run. You don't even walk. When Satan buffets and trials come, it is huge progress merely to stand.

God allows storms.

Several years ago on the East Coast, cod fishermen began to experience a real demand for their product, and they began to ship frozen cod all over the country. They discovered one drawback, however. In the freezing process, the cod lost their flavor. To remedy this, the fishermen shipped their cod live in saltwater tanks to be processed once they reached their destination.

The fish arrived okay, but because they were sitting in these tanks, they became spongy and soft. For several years, the fishermen didn't know what to do. Then someone had a brilliant idea: Ship the fish in saltwater tanks, but throw in some catfish—the natural enemy of the codfish. They tried it. The catfish chased the cod all around the tank as they traveled cross-country, and when the cod arrived, those that made it alive were flavorful and were sold at premium prices.

The catfish were necessary to keep the cod moving, thereby enhancing their texture and flavor.

So, too, God says to us, "Because I want the best for you both now and in eternity, I will allow an occasional catfish to come into your tank and chase you around for a little while. Otherwise, you'll just sit around and get soft."

- *I will not test you above that which you are able (1 Corinthians 10:13).*
- *I will always be there for you (Matthew 28:20).*
- *Call upon Me in the day of trouble (Psalm 50:15).*
- *Cast your care upon Me (1 Peter 5:7).*
- *And remember, all things are working together for good (Romans 8:28).*
- *Trust Me (Psalm 37:3).^a*

CONCLUDING QUESTIONS: *What, to you, has been the best part of this study through the Sermon on the Mount? What is one lesson you are going to take with you? What is one goal you are going to set as a result of your study?*

^aJon Courson, *Jon Courson's Application Commentary* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 2003), 55.

Teacher Helps

Is it fair to say that you can recognize a Christian by the way he lives his life? Why or why not?

Have you ever known anyone who put on a religious act, but wasn't really a believer? What were the circumstances?

C. S. Lewis gives a remarkable illustration from his own life of what the attitude is of many who hear the gospel:

When I was a child I often had toothache, and I knew that if I went to my mother she would give me something which would deaden the pain for that night and let me get to sleep. But I did not go to my mother—at least, not till the pain became very bad. And the reason I did not go was this. I did not doubt she would give me the aspirin: but I knew she would also do something else. I knew she would take me to the dentist next morning. I could not get what I wanted out of her without getting something more, which I did not want. I wanted immediate relief from pain: but I could not get it without having my teeth set permanently right. And I knew those dentists; I knew they started fiddling about with all sorts of other teeth which had not yet begun to ache. They would not let sleeping dogs lie. (Mere Christianity [New York: Macmillan, 1977], p. 177)

It is that very sort of thinking that keeps many people out of the kingdom: the price is more than they want to pay. Lewis goes on to say, in the imagined words of Christ, *"You have free will, and if you choose, You can push Me away. But if you do not push Me away, understand that I am going to see this job through.... I will never rest, nor let you rest, until you are literally perfect—until My Father can say without reservation that He is well pleased with you, as He said He was well pleased with Me" (p. 158).*

DR. ADRIAN ROGERS – HOW TO WEATHER THE STORMS OF LIFE

There are three categories here today, those who are just getting out of the storm, those in the midst of the storm, and those who are getting ready to get in a storm.

Why do some people fold up? Why do some people cave in? Why are some just blown away? I'll tell you why.

They have built upon the shifting sand of good intention. They have built upon the silt and the muck of religious activity. But they have never built upon the Lord Jesus Christ, for the Bible says other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is the Lord Jesus Christ.

You say, Pastor, I know one of the finest families in our church. They used to serve God, but difficulty came. And we don't see them anymore. But they were such a fine family Pastor. Yes, beautiful house. Well-furnished, well painted, well designed, and that was a wonderful family living in that spiritual house. **But it had no foundation.** John says in *1 John 2:19: they went out from us, but they were not of us. For if they had been of us, no doubt they would have continued with us. But they went out that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us.*

I'm not talking to you about sinless perfection. I'm not saying that if you get saved and give your heart to Jesus, and the storms come, that you won't have some doubts. You will. I'm not saying that you won't stumble, you may. I'm not saying that you might not have a relapse. You might have a relapse.

You know standing in the crowd when Jesus gave this Sermon on the Mount, about two kinds of builders. You know who was there, most likely? A man named Simon Peter, and a man named Judas. They were both there. They heard Jesus say, whosoever heareth these things of mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man that builds his house on a rock. The winds, the rains, the floods came. Beat upon the house, but it stood. Then they heard Jesus say, but a foolish man is like a man that built his house on the sand. The winds, the rains, the floods came. And the house fell and tragic, great, was the fall of it.

Judas was there, Simon Peter was there. Two kinds of builders, very similar. They both erected a spiritual house. Peter built one, and Judas built one. And had you looked at the two houses, you know what you would have said? You would have said, Judas can build a better house than Simon Peter.

Do you know who was the best man outwardly? Do you know who had the prettiest house? Not Peter. Judas had the best looking house. He did, didn't he? Do you know what they did with Judas? They made Judas the treasurer. Now, who do you get for the treasurer? The best. I mean the most trustworthy. When Jesus said, some, one of you is going to betray me, not a one of them said, oh I know who it is, it's that rascal Judas. Not a one of the said that, they said, I wonder if it's me? None of them said I know it's Judas, not a one. You know why? He had a good-looking house. I mean a good-looking house. He knew how to build a house almost.

But there was a difference. Ole' Simon Peter, bless his heart. Jesus said, Peter, who do you say that I am? Peter said, you are the Christ, the son of the living God, and Jesus said, that's right. And upon this rock, I'll build my house. I'll build my church. The very gates of Hell will not prevail against it. Peter knew that. Peter was weak, just like I am, and like you are. He wasn't much of a house builder, but boy did he have a good foundation. Did he have a good foundation? He laid his faith on a firm foundation.

Now, I want to tell you that a storm came, and it blew through the life of Judas, and a storm came, and it blew through the life of Simon Peter. And when the storm was over, Judas house was gone. It was gone. And Judas died and went to Hell.

You say did Judas lose his salvation? He never had it. The Bible says, Jesus speaking of Judas, have I not chosen you twelve and one of you is the devil. The Bible says that Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not. Judas never ever had real faith.

Simon Peter did. Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, Satan has desired you that he can sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for you that your faith will not fail. He had faith. And the Savior interceded for him. You know when the storm hit ole' Simon, a few windows were broken out, did you know that? And some shingles blew off the roof. And some things happened to that house.

I want to tell you something. After the storm, he was still standing. And became the flaming Apostle of Pentecost. And you know why? I'll tell you why. He had the real thing. He had the real thing. He knew God. He had heard the Word of God, he believed the Son of God. He bowed his knee to Jesus Christ. Weak, yes. Failing, yes. But the house stood, that was built on a rock. I wonder if you can say **my hope is built on nothing less than Jesus blood and righteousness. On Christ the solid rock I stand—all other ground is sinking sand.**