

The Wise Builder

- Reading: Matthew 7

- Matthew 7:24-27

- 24) "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.
- 25) And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.
- 26) And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.
- 27) And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

- One of the most remarkable aspects of God's Word is that it is so multi-layered
- There are multiple lessons that can be taken from almost any verse in the Bible
- Just as each person is different, and each person has different issues, concerns, personalities struggles and sins.... Each person then is bound to see a different lesson when they read the same verses
- That really is why we are able to have different exhortations 52 weeks a year, year after year, in over 1,500 Ecclesias around the world
- Sure, we often see similar things, but more often than not someone else is seeing something different than what you've seen in that same verse that you've been reading for years
- This morning I want to talk about the Wise Builder who built his house on the Rock
- I've probably heard half a dozen exhortations on this, yet when I read it again at the beginning of last month, something entirely new jumped out at me...
- Of course.... One of the hardest parts of being human is opening our hearts up to new lessons

- Because each one of us has different issues, concerns, personalities, struggles and sins, we tend to think that our way of looking at a verse is the best, and often even the only true way to look at that verse
- The way we have understood it in the past is the right way...
- I've noticed this trait in my own life
- The first opinion that I come to often ends up being the opinion I stick with
- Things that I was taught as a child in Sunday School continue to flavor and influence my opinions and understanding right through to this day
- That's fine
- It's okay to 'hold fast to the things you were taught in your youth'
- As long as I don't allow that trait within me to stop me from considering and accepting other valid and valuable lessons that I could receive in my life
- The parable of the Wise Builder and Foolish Builder comes at the very end of Christ's Manifesto, the Platform that he unveiled about the new order that he was bringing to the world, the sermon on the mount
- He concludes this several-day event with this amazingly simple, yet profound story
- It's not an uncommon approach to conclude your speech with a strong ending
- Something that people will remember
- Something that they will take away
- This Parable is highly regarded as his second-most famous Parable
- The Parable of the Prodigal Son being the most famous
- And in the verse after the Parable, the crowd responds incredulously:

- Matthew 7:28-29

- 28) And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching,
- 29) for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

- Now, in all fairness, this was in response to everything that Jesus had taught during that Sermon, but nonetheless, you get the feeling that he left them on a high note
- There are so many lessons from the Wise Builder and the Foolish Builder
- I'll admit that in my life I never made it much past the Sunday School Song...

*The wise man built his house upon the rock
And the rains came tumbling down
The rains came down and the floods came up
And the house on the rock stood firm*

*The foolish man built his house upon the sand
And the rains came tumbling down
The rains came down and the floods came up
And the house on the sand went smash*

*So, build your house on the Rock of Jesus Christ
And the blessings will come tumbling down
The blessings come down and the prayers go up
So, build your house on the Rock of Jesus Christ*

- I think there are some valuable lessons in that song...
- To me, it sounds like the overall message is directed to those who have not yet entered into a relationship with God
- That makes sense, in a Sunday School context
- We want our children to understand that they need to base their life on a firm foundation, and the only foundation that is reliable is to base your life in Christ

- So, when I read through Matthew 7 my default position is the one that I learned 50 years ago in Sunday School: a calling for us to get baptized and commit our lives to Christ
- A lesson that reinforces the idea that we need to base our lives on that which changes not
- A reassuring and comforting thought
- Completely correct, and wonderful...
- But, not the only way to look at this Parable
- I think that the traditional approach has been to look at the **Two Builders** themselves, and see what lessons we gain there
- There is plenty of material to look at:
 - The Wise and the Foolish Builders were both engaged in precisely the same job, and to a considerable extent achieved the same purpose
 - Both of them undertook to build houses
 - They both seemed like they are able to build a house without receiving instructions
 - I think that it's important to note that both builders persevered and finished their house
 - The Foolish Builder did not begin to build, and then cease his work because he was not able to finish
 - As far as we know, his house was finished with as much completeness as the other
 - If you had looked at the two structures, they would have seemed equally complete
 - The builders are much alike up to this point, but yet in reality they are wide as the poles apart both in work and character
 - The one builder is wise, the other foolish

- The one builder is superficial, the other substantial
- The one pretentious, the other sincere
- The Wise Builder's work was honest work where men's eyes could not judge it
- The other's work was only well constructed above ground, there was nothing of reality in the hidden parts; and hence in due time the first builder rejoiced as he saw his house outlive the storm; the other with his house was swept away to total destruction
- The lessons to us about how we should live our lives of service to God are readily apparent
- Not focusing on the superficial outside that people can see, but converting and transforming our characters from the INSIDE OUT where it really matters
- The chief lesson being that we should care enough to take the time to honestly establish a relationship with our Lord Jesus, and not just pretend that we do
- There are also lessons that we gain from looking at the **Houses** themselves...
- I notice that one huge difference between the two houses probably was that one of them built his house more quickly than the other
- The Wise Builder had to spend a great deal of time in foundation work
- Luke tells us that he dug deep, and laid his foundation on a rock
- Now that must have consumed weeks or even months of his time
- The foolish builder did not have this delay and he was able to begin at once to lay his courses of brick, and quickly raise the walls
- Of the two houses, one was built, I do not doubt, with far less trouble than the other
- Digging foundations in hard rock involves much labour
- The wise builder sweated hard all day; went to bed completely worn out, and yet there was not a stone appearing above the soil

- His neighbor, opposite him, had already completed the walls, and was putting on the roof, while there wasn't a single brick laid on the wise builder's house
- Was he mocked by his neighbor, because of his "old fashioned ways?"
- Because he hadn't adopted the new methods of construction?
- What happens when you build something on a poor, or even non-existent foundation?
- You would think that over time his walls would begin to settle
- Soon he would have huge gaps and cracks, maybe even some bricks coming loose, or rafters falling...
- Now the situation is reversed...
- The one who worked hard to lay a good foundation relaxes in his well-built house and enjoys a cold drink on a hot day
- The one who quickly threw up a house spends all of his time in a constant state of repairs and replacements
- The Foolish Builder would have had a To Do List that wouldn't quit...
- The lessons from the Houses themselves speak to those who attend church regularly, but do have the church all the way down to their foundations
- And the rub is that most people will never know the difference...
- But, God sees it
- God knows our secrets
- God sees what's lying beneath our outer walls
- God sees how much running around we are doing to cover up our shortcomings
- God is looking for honesty

- God is looking for believers that have a foundation in Him
- Lack of depth, lack of sincerity, lack of reality in religion: these are signs of our times
- Lack of sincere dealing with one's own soul, carelessness concerning living upon Christ; much reading about him, much talking about him, but too little feeding upon his flesh, and drinking of his blood: these are common problems today
- The lesson is that we need to serve God on the Inside, and not just on the Outside
- There are so many lessons in this four verse Parable...
- But, none of those are what I noticed when I read it again last month...
- Look again at Verse 24:
- Matthew 7:24

24) "Everyone then who hears these words of mine **and does them** will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

- That's what hit me this time!
- This isn't only about building your foundation on Jesus
- This isn't only about having your roots based in a firm and clear understanding of The Truth
- This is very much about **SERVING CHRIST!**
- The Parable is a reminder that we need to actually DO what Christ asks of us
- The Wise Builder is the person who not only hears the Words of Christ, but follows through and **DOES THEM**
- That act of obedience makes all the difference
- The act of filling your life with service is what changes us and prepares us
- It's not just about having a solid base of understanding

- It's also about doing what Christ has asked us to do!
- This lesson is not about being baptized or not
- This lesson is intended for two types of Followers
- One who simply proclaims to be a Follower, he hears that same words of Jesus that everyone hears, but in actuality, he doesn't do them
- The other takes them into his heart and does them
- Changes his life to live the way that Jesus asks him to
- The Wise Builder is the one who looks to the Bible for answers, and then does what he finds
- The Foolish Builder attends the same Bible Class, hears the same Exhortation, does the same Daily Readings, but doesn't really let those words enter into his heart and affect the decisions that he makes in his daily life
- The Wise Builder hears the Words of Christ, and **DOES THEM**
- On the surface that seems like quite a daunting task!
- Maybe it's easier just to study and build a firm foundation...
- But the beauty is that Christ's Commandments aren't that hard to do
- The Words of Christ aren't that complicated to understand...
- It's not like the Law of Moses with its layers of complexity and myriads of rules
- The Commandments of Christ are easy to understand:
- John 15:12
 - 12) "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.
- They are easy to understand, and they really aren't that hard to follow...

- Love each other
- At the end of the day, it's really not your job to figure out who is deserving of your Love
- It's just your job to Love each other
- Jesus wants us to love
- It's not complicated
- It doesn't take years of study to figure it out
- Just love people more than you love yourself
- This morning the next thing that Jesus says next in John 15 is particularly poignant
- John 15:13

13) Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends.

- That's what we are here to remember this morning
- The next thing we do this morning is remember the fact that Jesus laid down his Life for us
- Soon we will partake of his body and his blood, a memorial of that sacrifice
- Jesus clearly connects the gift that he gave us with this commandment
- Look what he says in the next verse...
- John 15:14

14) You are my friends if you do what I command you.

- If we keep the commandments he gave us, to Love one another as he has loved us, then we are his friends

- If we love one another, then we are the Wise Builder, not the Foolish Builder
- And now we turn to another of our Lord's Commandments that we need to obey
- 1st Corinthians 11:23-24
 - 23) For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread,
 - 24) and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, "This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me."