

I invite you to open your bibles this morning, to today's scripture text, which can be found in the book of Matthew, the 7th chapter, verses 24-27. We conclude our series revealing Christ's teachings from the Sermon on the Mount. In today's scripture, our Lord Jesus closes his sermon with a parable of practical outworking in the Christian life. Revealing the principle of practice.

Our Fathers Word, (Mt 7:24-27)

"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. 25 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. 26 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. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

Build your house upon the rock! Jesus Christ is the rock of salvation, the cornerstone of the house that will not fall. As a Rock, Christ is distinguished by stability, and will not be shaken or removed. He, who was the Rock of salvation to the tribes ready to die from thirst, is the same to all mankind in every age. His presence never removes and his grace never fails. He is Jehovah, the Rock of eternal ages.

For the last several weeks, within Jesus' Sermon on the Mount it has been revealed to us the core of our Lord Jesus' intimate teachings as he opened up His heart, and poured out his mind to us. It is not enough for us to *hear* these sayings; *we must put them into practice*. Not only must we *hear*, we must *do*.

We must not dismiss the vital importance of the lessons that Jesus has given to us. He has great concern for the condition of our mind, our hearts, and our actions. Therefore, Jesus has given to us this constitution, this sermon, this system of laws and principles, which is intended to govern us, His kingdom subjects. This governs our thoughts, our speech, and our actions.

Jesus closes His sermon with a parable that drives home the importance of obedience. The importance of putting his wisdom into practice, in our daily lives, moment by moment. This parable is a simple message, one that is just perfect, the Lord Jesus is such a perfect teacher. He ends this wonderful theologically filled sermon, many times deep theology, with a simple illustration to draw our attention to the importance of building our life upon the right foundation.

Wise or foolish. Which of these are we? Our Lord is not changing directions in this message. As we look back we realize that he has been giving us this idea of choices. Each and every one of us make choices. Jesus is drawing us to a decision about our choices; especially when it comes to eternal life, and to an abundant life.

He started out asking us about the gates; the narrow gate, or the wide gate. Then he talked about the way; the narrow way or the wide way. Then he talked about our destination; either life, or destruction. He talked about the two messengers, one that is false and one that is true. He talked about our fruit; either good, or bad. He talked about salvation; by faith or by works. Today, he is talking about a man; a wise man or a foolish man relating to the foundation of our life; is it built upon Jesus, the rock, or the world, sand? Wise or foolish. The choice is ours to make. Here is a picture that Jesus draws for us about two houses, and two builders.

We know Jesus was the expert on scripture, but he was also an expert in life. He was a craftsman that knew all about the building of houses, and when he spoke about the foundations of a house he knew what he was talking about. This is no illustration formed by a scholar in his study; this is the illustration of a practical man. This is not a far-fetched illustration; it is a story of the kind of thing which could well happen.

In Palestine the builder must think ahead. There were so many gullies, which in the summer were pleasant sandy hollows, but in winter, were raging torrents of rushing water. When a person was looking for a place to build a house, they might find a pleasantly sheltered sandy hollow; and they may think this is a suitable place to build.

But, if they were short sighted, they might well have built their house in the dried up bed of a river, and, when the winter came, the house would disintegrate. Even on an ordinary site it was tempting to begin building on the smoothed-over sand, and not to bother digging down to the shelf of rock below, but that way, disaster lay ahead. Only a house whose foundations are firm can withstand the storm; and only a life whose foundations are sure can stand the test. Ask any architect the most important part of a building and they will tell you the foundation. Here our Lord gives us an illustration about building our lives and making sure that the most important part, the foundation, is secure.

As we consider the words of Jesus in verse 24, "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 verse in the first chapter of James verse 22 comes to mind, "Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says." The Lord says in his sermon, "he that hears these words and does them, I will liken unto a wise man." In James it talks about those that do not do what it says, deceive themselves. So many people will come to church and hear the message from a preacher, hear the message of God, then they will walk out the church door supposedly having fulfilled their religious obligation, but nothing has changed. Nothing has touched them. They came and they heard the word of God, they were challenged by the word of God, but in some way or another we have gotten to the point where we can satisfy ourselves by walking out the door and say "well at least I was at church." Don't you see, that's not what God's after. God's after a change. God's after taking the word of God and making it applicable to our lives. So much so that we *do something* with what we hear. If we don't, James says we deceive ourselves.

If we think that all we have to do is hear the message, hear the word of God and we have fulfilled all that God has intended this morning, then we have only deceived ourselves. Let me ask you this, when we read that verse, "... **he that hears these words and does them, I will liken unto a wise man.**" What makes this man wise? We get so wrapped up into the foundation building process that we overlook the fact that makes him wise. The fact that makes the man wise in verse 24 isn't his building technique, but the fact that he heard the message, and he did something with it. That's where wisdom comes from. Its whenever we take the architects plans, and we act upon the architects plans.

Many of us are satisfied with just studying the plans. But God wants you to act upon the plans. God is the great architect, and the plans that he has for you, are written out for you, in one of the greatest architectural plans that's ever been created, and that's the word of God.

2 Ti 3:14-15 Paul writing to Timothy says this,

14" But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it," he is saying stay true to the things you know are right, stay true to the things you know that have worked. Then he goes on to say, **"15 and how from infancy you have known the holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."** The Holy Scriptures is the plan, God has designed for each of your lives, a wonderful plan for your life. Your house is going to look different from my house, your plans are a little different than my plans, but they are designed by a grand design architect, the divine architect, and that's God Himself.

He has a plan for you, in your life. This architect has worked out all the problems, in advance, that the builder needs to know as he begins. This architect has a workable design if the plans are followed. What a shame it is that we have the plans, but we fail to follow the plans. So many people say, "well its my life and im going to do what I want to do!" If we are saved, we are bought with a price that Christ paid on the cross with his blood! We are building on something that's not ours, Jesus tells us we are Gods building. God gives us the plan, and we need to follow the plan. When completed, the finished house will have the finger prints of God all over it, if we allow Him to direct our building process.

Let's talk about this wise man. How he becomes a wise builder, verse 24 goes on to say, this wise man " **...who built his house on the rock. 25 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.**" The first thing we should notice about this builder, is that he was a builder who wanted to build something for the future. He wanted to build something that would last. He wants to build it on a foundation of rock that will last. He doesn't want to build something today, and then have to rebuild it again tomorrow. He's given some forethought to the fact that he needs to build this on a firm foundation. He realizes that it's not only for him to enjoy, but also for others.

We build a house for the future, not for the here and now. So many people today, their lives are the building process, the house that God has given them, and they are building upon it without any thought of the future, the eternal. Without any thought about how this is going to affect my children, how this is going to affect my wife or my husband, how it's going to affect my grandchildren, or even my great

grandchildren. They live their life for one person, and that's for them. They could care less about how this could affect their children, by these decisions.

The thought is for the family. Leaving them a lasting heritage, of what they build. It's built to last. The wise builder will build upon what God provides. Not their own doing.

Lets take a look at 1 Cor 3. Paul gives us some instructions here about building, and we need this today. [1 Co 3:9-12](#)

"9 For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, God's building. 10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as an expert builder, and someone else is building on it." Paul is referring to the church here, but it is also conducive to us, because we are the building of God now. We are the temple of God. Paul goes on, *"But each one should be careful how he builds. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ."* Paul refers to the church but now he speaks to us, and tells us that we are building upon the foundation that God has laid, that foundation being Jesus Christ.

Your life according to this text must be built in conjunction with God the Father. There must be a connection between you and God. He says, we labor together with God. Your house that you are building on your foundation, your life that you are building, needs to be in conjunction with what God determines to do. He's the architect, you need to be listening to what he has to say. You need to be taking direction from him. So many of us though, we've got our life, and we're living it the way we want to, and we are giving little thought about what the master builder wants us to build, or has to say.

In this parable, Jesus demands two things.

His first demand is that we should listen to Him. One of the greatest difficulties we face today, is the simple fact that people often *do not know what Jesus said*, or what *the Church teaches*. In fact, the matter is worse. They often have a notion which is quite mistaken about what Jesus said, and what the church teaches. It is not the duty of a person to condemn either a person, or an institution, without *hearing* what they teach – and today, that is precisely what so many people do. The first step of the Christian life is simply to give Jesus Christ a chance to be heard.

Jesus also demands what we should do. Knowledge only becomes relevant when it is translated into action. It would be perfectly possible for a person to pass an examination in Christian Ethics with the highest distinction, and yet, not be a Christian. If we have read the entire Bible, and we do not experience our living God, what's the point of reading it? Knowledge must become action; theory must become practice; theology, *the bible*, must become life. What's the point of going to a doctor unless we are prepared to do the things we hear him say to us. What's the point of going to an expert, unless we are prepared to act upon his advice.

Yet, there are thousands of people who listen to the teaching of Jesus Christ every Sunday, who have a very good understanding and knowledge of what Jesus taught, and yet, they make little or no deliberate attempt to put it into practice. If we are to be in any sense, followers of Jesus, we must *hear and do*.

God gives us the plan, and we need to follow the plan. We must hear, and do.

Can you think of any word in which hearing and doing are summed up? There is such a word, and that word is obedience. Jesus demands our implicit obedience. To learn to obey Jesus is the most important thing in life.

Some time ago there was a report of the case of a sailor in the Navy who was very severely punished for a breach of discipline, for his lapse in obedience. The punishment was so severe that to the public who heard of this incident, it was thought to be too severe. A newspaper asked its readers to express their opinions about the severity of the punishment.

One of the responses was from a man who also served in the navy. In his view the punishment was not too severe. His remark was that discipline was absolutely essential, for the purpose of discipline was to condition a man automatically and unquestioningly to obey orders, and to develop a deep sense of obedience. For a man's life might well depend on such obedience.

He cited a case from his own experience. He was in a launch which was towing a much heavier vessel in a rough sea. The vessel was attached to the launch by a wire cable. Suddenly in the midst of the wind and the spray there came a single, insistent word of command from the officer in charge of the launch. "DOWN!" he shouted. On the spot, the crew of the launch flung themselves down to the deck. Just at that moment the wire towing-cable snapped, and the broken parts of it whipped about like a maddened steel snake. If any man had been struck by it he would have been instantly killed. But the whole crew automatically obeyed and no one was injured. If anyone had stopped to argue, or to ask why, he would have been a dead man. Obedience saved lives.

It is such obedience that Jesus demands. It is Jesus' claim that obedience to him is the only sure foundation for life; and it is his promise that the life which is founded on *obedience to him is safe*, no matter what storms may come.

If a person lives according to the principles of the Sermon on the Mount, the world calls them a fool; Jesus calls them a WISE MAN. The world considers a wise man to be someone who lives by sight, who lives for the present, and who lives for themselves; Jesus calls such a person a fool. It is legitimate to use the wise and foolish builders to illustrate the gospel. The wise man puts his full confidence in the Rock, Christ Jesus, as Lord and Savior. The foolish man refuses to repent and rejects Jesus as his only hope of salvation. But the interpretation of the parable actually carries us beyond salvation to its practical outworking in the Christian life, through practice.

Heavenly Father,

- We thank you so much for sending us your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.
- That you have made for us the strongest foundation for our life,

Our Rock of Salvation.
- How wonderfully amazing is your plan for our lives Lord, that you made each and everyone of us with a unique plan, that providing that we follow your plan,
- We will be precisely built, in your image, as you have designed us to be.
- Forgive us Father when we turn from your plan, when we hear your word,

And fail to do what you are calling us to do, follow Christ our Lord.
- Give us the strength to stay focused on you Lord, on Jesus, to not only

Hear, but to do exactly as we are told to do with obedience to Christ.
- We thank you for your amazing grace, that you have planned in advance our lives that can be lived through Christ our Lord, and that they will remain standing strong against the tides of life, with Jesus as our Rock of Salvation.