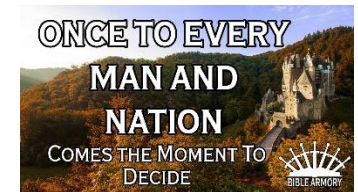


How a Wise Man Builds His House
Spilman Memorial Baptist Church, Kinston NC
Dr. H. Powell Dew, Jr.
September 12, 2021

Text: Matthew 7:24-29

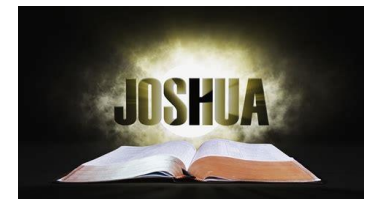
Purpose: Jesus lets us know that a wise person builds their house upon the rock. A wise person will hear and do what Jesus has instructed us. Failure to listen and do is like building your house on sand – one day the storms will come and it will fall.

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide.



The power of deciding is a wonderful privilege and a tremendous responsibility. Some people choose to shirk their God given privilege because they are afraid of making the wrong decision. So, they simply go through life just like a leaf floating on the water, being pushed down the stream by the flow. They resign themselves to their “lot in life” because they are not going to “man up” and do what needs to be done inwardly to put themselves in a place in life to decide properly. It is so easy to go with the flow around us, and so hard to stand for and do what is right.

In the Old Testament we find a man that was chosen by God to lead the people of Israel out of the wilderness and into the Promised Land. God chose this man, after Moses time, primarily because earlier in his life,



Joshua was one of only two people that said they could enter the Promised Land with God's help. Joshua trusted God even when all the others around him buckled in fear. The people of Israel gave into fear and chose not to trust God and take God at His word. As a result the people of Israel wandered for forty years in the wilderness until all those stiff-necked individuals died and were buried in the sand.

God chooses people that trust Him and God chose Joshua. Toward the end of his life, he challenged the people of Israel to make a decision. He told them,



“Now therefore, fear the Lord, serve Him in sincerity and in truth, and put away the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord! And if it seems evil to you to serve the Lord, choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods which your fathers served on the other side of the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” (Joshua 24:14-15)

Once to every man and nation comes the moment to decide.

God is calling us to make a firm decision. The time of sitting on the fence has ended. Walking down the middle of the road only gets you hit coming and going.

There are several places across our great nation known as a continental



divide. As you travel across America, you will occasionally see a sign that says you have crossed this invisible boundary. The continental divide is the place where water will naturally run in one direction towards the Pacific Ocean or it will run towards the Atlantic Ocean. I have crossed this boundary several times in my life, usually at the highest peaks. For you see water cannot head in two directions at the same time. It will flow one way or another.

The same is true in our life. We reach a point where we have tried to ride two horses at the same time. Eventually a choice has to be made. Maybe you have dated two people at one time. But at some point, you have to make a decision. If you don't, I will tell you one or both of the people you are dating will decide for you! Sometimes when you travel down the road, you may actually be traveling on multiple highways at a time. But at some point, you have to decide, which one you will follow.



Another Old Testament illustration of a mighty leader that came to the forefront of the people of Israel was the prophet, Elijah. The people of Israel found themselves led by a wicked King Ahab and his equally evil wife, Jezebel. The people had turned from worshipping the one and only God and became engrossed in the worship of the Amorite god, Baal.



Elijah challenged the people of Israel to make a decision. In his speech before the people of Israel and 300 prophets of Baal, Elijah was standing alone and challenged those gathered there with this speech: “And

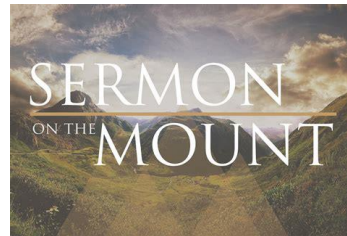
Elijah came to all the people, and said, “How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.” But the people answered him not a word.” (I Kings 18:21)

What a stinging commentary: “But the people answered him not a word.”

As you can see, Joshua and Elijah took a stand and made their faith in God their unshakable foundation.

Paired Contrasts

Jesus is challenging those listening with the same kind of decision moment. At the close of the passage known as the



Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives us four examples of the two ways in which we can direct our life. Last week we looked at the two paths – one which is broad and which everyone starts out on. The other path is narrow and restrictive. Jesus said few find that narrow path that leads to life.

The second pair of contrasts involved two plants. Depending upon the type of tree or plant it was determined the kind of fruit that it produced. Good fruit comes from good trees and bad fruit comes from bad trees. The bad trees are cut down and thrown into the fire.

Jesus continued that illustration by saying not everyone that says, “Lord, Lord” will enter into the kingdom of God. Only those known by God will enter in.

The capstone of what Jesus said in these paired contrasts involves two homes. Maybe you remember this lesson in a previous sermon, or a Sunday school lesson. One home was built on a solid foundation and the other was built on sandy, unstable ground.

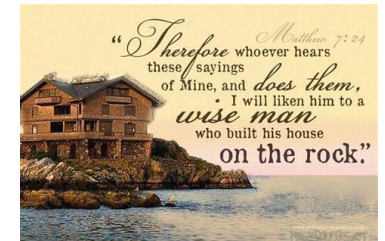


What I want to point out to you is that each of these decisively divides one group from the other. You cannot take two paths – you must choose. You cannot have your foot in one world and safely be able to continue in the other. You cannot serve two masters. You will love the one and hate the other. You cannot have good fruit coming from bad trees. You cannot have a solid and unstable foundation at the same time.

For a few moments this morning I want to point out that there are two foundations, two houses, one storm, and two endings.

The Two Foundations: Rock and Sand

Jesus said, “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: and the rains came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.” (Matthew 7:24-25)



I imagine since Jesus was a carpenter he would have worked on many houses. He focused on something that his listeners could understand clearly. We know if the houses

foundation crumbles or gives way, the rest of the house will follow.

That is why Jesus has been referred through the centuries as the foundation stone for our faith. That analogy did not begin with Jesus; it goes back to God being our sure anchor, our steady foundation, or Rock.

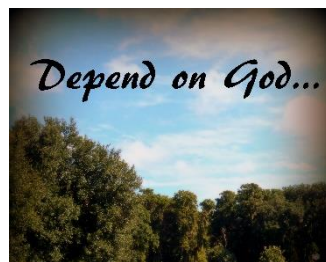
The psalmist wrote, *“The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.”* (Psalm 18:2)

He also wrote in Psalm 27:5, *“For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.”*

The prophet Isaiah wrote, *“A man will be as a hiding place from the wind and, a cover from the tempest, as rivers of water in a dry place, as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land.”*

God has always been seen as someone that is unmovable, stable, dependable, trustworthy, and unchanging. The world in which we live changes so very quickly.

The opinion polls fluctuate back and forth. The economy that once was stable is now coming unglued. The things and people we thought were dependable have let us down time and time again. The things we trust are broken quickly – our government, our judicial system, our safety nets, our



finances, our health, our spouses, and even our dearest friends. ***God is the only one that we can depend upon.***

Jesus is telling us a house built on the rock has a sure foundation that will not let you down. Jesus is saying if you hear what He has taught (the Sermon on the Mount) and applied it (consistently and daily) to your life; you will be like a man or woman that has a sure foundation.

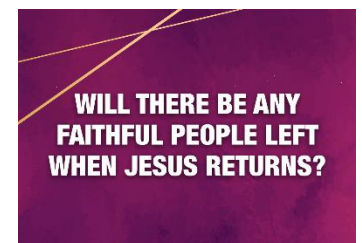
Let me stop right there. Yes maybe you have heard what Jesus has said here in the Sermon on the Mount. Yes you have heard many of the other things Jesus has taught. The question that only you can answer, ***“Have you done what He said do?”***



If you have placed your faith in Christ and been obedient, then you can have confidence in this life and in the life to come. Your reward is secure. You have a place among the saints of God through the ages. But you have to decide to be obedient. God did not force Himself on Joshua or Elijah. God will not force you to be obedient.

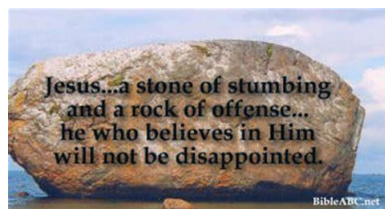
Is your world crumbling all around you and you cannot understand why? Go back and see if you have REALLY made Jesus Christ and ALL that He taught applicable to your life.

- Have you been faithful with your resources?
- Have you been faithful in attending to the study of His word?
- Have you been faithful in prayer?



- Have you been faithful in loving God above all other things in life?
- Have you loved your neighbor as yourself?
- Have you put the work of the Kingdom of God first and foremost in all you say and do?

I believe if we were honest, we would say we have all failed in attending to the things we should daily. But the heart of the matter is ***“Have you made Jesus and his teachings central to who you are?”*** Have you made Him your foundation stone?



Paul wrote to the Romans, quoting from Isaiah and said, *“Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, and whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”* (Romans 9:33, Isaiah 8:14, 28:16)

Jesus is a stumbling block for so many people and they fail to lay that bedrock stone as the beginning of all they do. That stone is either a blessing or a curse. That stone will be the one that all who fall on it will be saved, or the stone by which all who reject it will be crushed. Ephesians 2:20 describes Jesus is the chief cornerstone. If we are to have life in this present world and in the next, we must make Christ the foundation in all of our thinking.

In Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. As the old hymn says, *“Where else can I go but to the Lord?”*

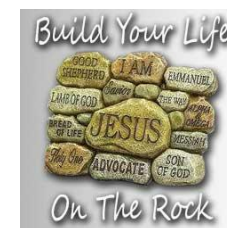
I could spend all day on Jesus as our foundation. But I do want to point out that there was a second choice on which a home can be built. The choice is simply sand. I know we have all seen homes built at or near the beach where a home’s foundation is built on shifting sand. Yes, they may place pilings deep into the sand, but when the winds come, and the waves crash against the piers, the home gives way.



Jesus said, *“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; and the rains descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on the house: and it fell. And great was its fall.”*

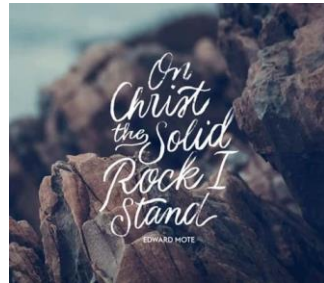
The world places all their worth and future in the vocation they choose, the stock portfolio they acquire, the land they possess, the money they have in the bank, their good looks, their affiliation with this group of people, or this team. But as we know, jobs fail, stocks wither to nothing, land can be unproductive for several years in a row and the bank can repossess it and inflation can eat away the value of any money you have saved. Your good looks only last for a season, your clothes are quickly outdated, and the team you love so dearly can tarnish their reputation in an instant.

When you build your life upon sand, eventually when the storms of life come, it will crumble. When you come to the end of your life, those things will not carry you to the next life. Only the life built on Jesus



Christ can assure you of an eternal home in the presence of God.

Jesus Christ is our only hope. He is the foundation of our security. His cross created a bridge from this life to the next. His cross provides the atonement we need to be reconciled back to God. The cross of Calvary breaks the bondage of this world's store and relieves us of our guilt. It is Christ himself who is our foundation and His death and sacrifice are the basis of our hope. He has the right to come to us and say, *"Take my commandments as the foundation on which you build your lives."*



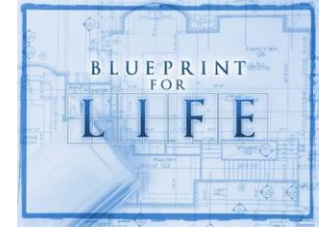
Edward Mote expressed it so well:

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and righteousness;
I dare not trust the sweetest frame,
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ the Solid Rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand,
All other ground is sinking sand.

An agnostic told an agnostic dying friend, "Stick to it Tom, stick to it." "Yes," Tom replied, "but there's nothing to stick to."

When you build your life on sand, there is nothing to stick to.

Two Houses



Once we have considered the foundation we are building upon, a second item to consider is the house that is being built. If you have had the opportunity to build a house or remodel your home, you started with a blueprint. It showed the arrangement of the rooms, where the closets are located, the size of the bathrooms, and what features will go into the kitchen.

Jesus is asking us to consider not only the foundation, but the house as well. Have you ever considered your life as a whole with a definite moral character stamped upon it? I have met many people over the years that never considered their life as a whole. Life is not composed only of individual bricks and individual 2x4's. Life is comprised of daily decisions, weekly obligations, intentional plans that are welded together to make a whole life.

Some individuals live their life hand to mouth. The drift here for a while, and there for a while, never giving one moments thought to the kind of life they are building. Before you know it, a person's life is built and what kind of house do they have? Let every person take care how they build their life and do not despise the little things. We need to remember small bricks build large homes.

One Storm

Another item we should consider is that the same storm impacted both homes. When a tornado comes, it does not care what is in its path. When a hurricane blows, it pushes

against everything. As the children's song says: "The rains came down and the floods came up."

We may look at two homes-built side by side. They may look the same but the quality of the workmanship and the foundation upon which they are built determines if the home will make it safely through the storm.



How many people, firmly grounded in God, who daily built a life of character, have suddenly encountered tragedy? Maybe death came into their family unexpectedly. Maybe cancer has pressed upon those they love. Maybe unemployment or other storm is blowing. Some will say, "I don't know why this is happening to me? I have tried to live right, do right, and trust God with all my heart. I thought God loved me!?"

Jesus is letting us know that the storms of life will come to all. All of us gathered here have experienced heart breaking situations. And there probably will be more to come if the Lord tarries in coming. If our life is anchored in Christ, we can be assured the house may be battered, but we will make it through.

I believe there is a second way in which this parable of Jesus can be considered. It could imply that all of us will one day have to stand before the judgment seat of Christ. Our lives will be weighed and measured. Some want to believe that if the things they have done in life outweigh the bad things they have done, then God will surely welcome them home.



But God's word says our works are as filthy rags. It is only when we put on the righteousness of Christ will we be able to withstand the judgment. We need to realize our works will come under the judgment of Christ. All of it will face the fire of judgment. Some will be consumed and some will stand. It is a sad fact that many will stand before God with everything they have treasured in this life, will find it completely consumed and have nothing to show for a lifetime of existence here on earth.

I want to encourage you to consider the life you are building and what works will withstand the judgment of God.

Two Results: One Stood and One Fell

At last, after the storm has passed, you will find that there are two outcomes. One house may have a few shingles missing. It may have a few cracked windows. But the house has come through the storm because it had a good foundation and was a firm building. The house withstood the storm.



A life of obedience to Christ is stable. It is not based upon a Christ that vanishes at the first sign of trouble. Anything that you are doing apart from Christ will not last. The only thing that eternally lasts is God and the things done according to His will.



The second house built on shifting sands simply fell. How many lives are crumbling around us because they are not following the precepts

taught by Jesus Christ? How many families are tearing apart because they have not made Christ the head of their home? How many communities have become war zones because the presence of Christ and His people have left?

Jesus does not say to us a **good** person builds a house on the rock. He says a **wise** person builds upon the Rock. He does not say a **bad** person builds a house on sand. He says a **foolish** person builds on the sand. Jesus is not forcing us to do as He commands. He is putting the decision in our court. He will be our final judge.

Quote to Ponder

Once to Every Man and Nation
By James Russell Lowell
(1819-1891)

Once to every man and nation,
comes the moment to decide.
In the strife of truth with falsehood,
for the good of evil side
Some great cause, some great decision,
offering each the bloom or blight,
And the choice goes on forever 'twixt
that darkness and that light.

Then to side with truth is noble,
when we share her wretched crust,
Ere her cause bring fame and profit,
and 'tis prosperous to be just;
Then it is the brave man chooses,
while the coward stands aside,
'Till the multitude make virtue,
of the faith Thy had denied.

By the light of burning martyrs,
Christ, thy bleeding feet we track,
Toiling up new Calvaries ever,
with the cross that turns not back;
New occasions teach new duties,
ancient values test our youth;
They must upward still and onward,
who would keep abreast of truth.

Tho' the cause of evil prospers,
yet the truth alone is strong;
Tho' her portion be the scaffold,
and upon the throne of wrong;
Yet that scaffold sways the future,
and behind the dim unknown,
Standeth God within the shadow,
keeping watch above His own.
(James Russell Lowell 1819-1891)

God is watching over us seeing how we will build our life.

Have you made the decision to build on the Rock of Jesus Christ?

Are you building a house, holy and pleasing unto God?
Are you prepared for the storms of life and the coming judgment?

There is still time to set your foundation right. There is still time to decide whom you will serve.

When the trumpet of the Lord shall sound
and time shall be no more ...

And the morning breaks, eternal
bright and fair;

When the saved of earth shall
gather over on the other shore,

And the roll is called up yonder
...

Will you be there?

LET US PRAY

