

Parables 1 – Laying the right foundation

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Preacher: James Ross

[0 : 00] Now, while the children are heading to their classes, we can look up in our Bibles, our devices, the book of Matthew.

We've got a couple of readings from Matthew, and then we'll read some more in a few moments. We're reading from the Sermon on the Mount. Let me introduce our new sermon series to us.

And we're going to be thinking about parables with purpose. So some of the stories that Jesus tells in Matthew's Gospel. So in Matthew, Jesus is presented as the teacher.

And there's five big blocks of his teaching recorded there. As Matthew invites us to recognize Jesus isn't just a redeemer for us, someone who saves us from sin.

He's also the one who teaches us, teaches us how to live in God's kingdom. And one of the ways Jesus teaches is by parables. And they are stories with purpose.

[1 : 01] Everyday stories with a deeper spiritual reality. Revealing truths about Jesus the King. Life in the kingdom of God. Stories that are an invitation for us both to reflection and to transformation.

So today, we will think about the parable that comes at the end of the Sermon on the Mount. Perhaps a very familiar parable of the wise and foolish builders. It's a chance for us to reflect on, how's my listening?

Am I listening to Jesus well? What's my life built on deep down? Am I prepared for the storms that come? So let's read from chapter 5, verse 1 to 20, and then verse 43 to 48.

And let's hear the word of God. Now, when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him and he began to teach them.

He said, Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[2 : 25] Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven. For in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house.

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them.

For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the law until everything is accomplished. Therefore, anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven.

[3 : 34] But whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

And then at verse 43, You have heard that it was said, and this is teaching from the Pharisees, Love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven.

He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that?

And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Amen. And we'll return and read some of chapter 6 and 7 in a few moments. But before we do that, let's once again come before God in prayer. Lord, as we bow before you, we would acknowledge that you are the great king, that you are in authority over us as our creator and our sustainer and our judge.

[5 : 01] Lord, we thank you for sending Jesus to be that long-promised king. Lord, we thank you for sending us free from slavery to sin leading to death, to bring us into eternal life and into the kingdom of God.

Lord, we thank you for sending us free from the kingdom of God. Lord, we thank you for that call of Jesus, that invitation to come to him, weary and burdened, and to find rest.

Lord, we pray for those in our church family. We pray for those in our own families who are weary, who are experiencing burdens of many kinds.

Lord, we pray that in your mercy you would draw them and us to the Lord Jesus to find rest and to find hope in his love and in the good news that he brings.

Lord, we pray too for our society, as we recognize that there are so many burdens and pressures, there's so many fears that exist right now.

[6 : 16] Lord, in all the doubt and fear and confusion, may you and your providence draw many people to be looking to you for hope and for help and for healing.

Lord, may you be at work among us. Lord, we thank you that you don't just call us to yourself, if you also send us out to be your witnesses.

Lord, we thank you for that privilege of being ambassadors for our King. Again, we confess how weak we feel, how often we fail to represent you well, whether that's in the things that we do or indeed the things that we fail to do.

But Lord, we pray that with your help, by your grace and by your spirit in us, you would enable us to live for you in such a way that people without hope and without clarity on what is truth would be drawn to Jesus, their Savior, through us, through our lives individually and through our shared life.

We remember that Jesus said that they will know we are Christians by our love and we pray that our love would be evident and it would be attractive and appealing, that we would be enabled in some small measure to reflect your amazing love.

[7 : 43] Lord, we pray for your church in Scotland today. We pray for rural places. We pray for urban places, our towns and cities.

Lord, we thank you for church plants. We thank you for established churches. And we pray for those churches that are weak and discouraged. Lord, we ask that you would build them in their faith and their hope and their love.

And we thank you for those churches that are knowing growth and encouragement. Lord, continue to renew them in your word. Lord, we pray that for every Christian church in Scotland, we would know your spirit moving in power.

that we would be growing in maturity, growing to be more like Jesus, fed by your words, dependent on prayer, and then going out to live as your witnesses.

Lord, we pray for your church in the world today. We think of nations in the news. We pray that as France goes to the polls for a new president, Lord, that you would be reviving that nation in the Christian faith.

[9 : 05] That we recognize a long history in the past of faith and sending people all over the world on mission. But Lord, so much of that heritage has been lost.

But we pray that you would draw people and draw the nation back to yourself. Lord, we continue to remember Ukraine and we remember your people in Ukraine today.

For those who perhaps are unable to gather, for those who gather with a sense of fear and sadness, Lord, may you be present among them. May you give them the deep and lasting peace of knowing Jesus as Lord.

And we pray that you would enable the church to continue to minister mercy to those who are in need. And Lord, we pray for a swift and a lasting peace.

Lord, we also pray for parts of the world where our brothers and sisters in Christ are persecuted today. Where there is the threat of a police action or a local community intervention as they would seek to worship their God and Savior.

[10 : 16] Lord, we ask that you would help them to persevere in their faith and enable them to love and to pray for their enemies. And Lord, we pray for the many hundreds of millions of people today who have never heard of Jesus, who don't know anything of the good news of the gospel, and who have no lasting hope.

Lord, we pray that by your mercy and by your spirit, you would raise up people from all nations to go to all nations, making disciples of all nations, as you have commanded.

Lord, that we would be willing to pray and to give and indeed to go and to sacrifice if you would lead us in order to make Jesus known.

Lord, we pray that as we gather here today, that you would make Jesus known among us. Not just that we would grow in our information, but that we would be transformed, heart, mind and will.

And we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Now, before we turn back to Matthew, we're going to sing again. We're going to sing from Psalm 62, and we'll see again the theme of God as the rock.

[11 : 34] So let's stand and let's sing together. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. My honor and salvation rest On God my rock and mighty fort, O people, trust in him always.

To him alone pour out your heart. The low-born man is but a breath.

The high-born man is but a lie. Weighed in a balance side by side.

They come to nothing but a sigh. Do not seek after wealth by force.

Or triumph in ill-gotten gain. And even though your goods increase.

[13 : 56] Set not your heart on what is vain. My God has spoken.

I have heard that you are strong and loving, Lord.

Each one according to his deeds. You will assuredly reward.

And now let's continue to hear Jesus' teaching from the Sermon on the Mount.

Here as he teaches about prayer in chapter 6 from verse 5 to 13. And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others.

[15 : 09] Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father who is unseen. Then your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.

And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans. For they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

This then is how you should pray. Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

And then we're going to turn to chapter 7. And towards the end of the sermon, when Jesus begins to warn. So he's promised future grace. He's shown them his commands.

[16 : 09] And then he issues final warnings. Chapter 7, verse 13. Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction.

And many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life. And only a few find it. Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing.

But inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? Likewise every good tree bears good fruit.

But a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit. And a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven. But only the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

[17 : 02] Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name? And in your name drive out demons? And in your name perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly, I never knew you.

Away from me, you evildoers. 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 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. 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. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house and it fell with a great crash.

When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching. Because he taught as one who had authority and not as their teachers of the law. So this is the first of our stories with purpose.

It's the story of the wise and foolish builders. As we begin, I wonder if any of you have ever been in an earthquake simulator. Some of us live in extreme weather places and maybe you felt something like that.

[18 : 16] But I remember being in an earthquake simulator when they would begin to make the floor move, make everything on the walls begin to shake.

And in the safety of that science center, they were using that simulator to teach about the impact of earthquakes. Especially in that case, the focus was on the many earthquakes that hit Japan.

And how then engineers are building, designed to cope with those constant storms that come. That stress testing, both of the foundation and the structure, was vital to their building projects.

Well, this parable that we're reading today is about building. And it's about storms and it's about foundation. And it's the conclusion to the Sermon on the Mount.

Perhaps the most famous of Jesus' sermons, loved through all church history. And that parable has a message, doesn't it? A message about building wisely.

[19 : 21] And building wisely requires both hearing and doing the words of Jesus the King. Living all of life under his rule. So we're going to think about this parable, but we're going to use the building image.

And so we're going to think, first of all, about the importance of following the designer's plan. And we're going to think about building on the right foundation. And then we're going to think about the importance of preparing for the stress test.

Preparing for the storm that comes. So first of all, the importance of following the plan. Verse 24 tells us this. 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.

So the conclusion to the Sermon on the Mount. We can think about the Sermon on the Mount as a blueprint. A design plan for life in God's kingdom. Because this sermon comes from who?

It comes from Jesus. And Jesus is the Son of God. He is the Creator. He is the Lord. He is the Great Teacher. And so when we listen to Jesus' words as our Maker and King, He's calling us to live by the Maker's design.

[20 : 34] Now for any of us who've ever built anything, whether that be Lego or flat pack furniture or even a house, we know how important it is to follow the plan.

The designer's plan. Well, the truth of the Bible is that God is the great designer of us. And the way life works best for us if we live by His design.

And that's what Jesus is laying out in this sermon. Three things to very briefly say before we get to our parable. The Sermon on the Mount is a blueprint for life in what John Stott calls the Christian counterculture.

By which he means that Christians are called out from the world to live differently. Just as was the case with Old Testament Israel. So perhaps you remember the story in the book of Exodus where God's people were slaves, but then God by His power called them out.

He had called them to Himself, made a covenant commitment to them. So He called them to Himself, called them out, called them to meet Him on Mount Sinai, entered into covenant and gave them His commands.

[21 : 43] Now what have we got in the Sermon on the Mount? Here we have Jesus the Lord, and He calls His disciples up the mountain to meet with Him. And He speaks to them of grace.

And then He gives them commands. And He calls them out to be different. So having given the Beatitudes, He said to them, You are the salt of the earth.

What's the function of salt in that day? Largely to preserve, to stop corruption. The Christian church has that responsibility within society.

Jesus said, You are the light of the world. The contrast there with darkness that people live in without God. We are to be light that reflects the love of God and draws people to the Savior.

This whole sermon from Jesus is a reminder that there are two ways and only two ways to live. One that accepts Jesus as Lord and one that rejects. And the church is called to live under the rule of Jesus to be like a colony of heaven.

[22 : 53] To live a different life. To live by a different way. To live by the ethics of grace in God's kingdom and in the world. So we can also say that the Sermon on the Mount is a blueprint for a life of obedience to Jesus.

If we want to be obedient to Jesus, we have so much instruction in here. And much of what we have, especially in chapters 5 and 6, is Jesus teaching about greater righteousness.

Or about deeper righteousness. Not just about surface level religion. But on matters of the heart. Jesus says some very striking things in chapter 5. We read in verse 17.

I have not come to abolish the law and the prophets, but to fulfill them. In verse 20, he said, Unless your righteousness surpasses the Pharisees and the teachers of law, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

And at the end of chapter 5, he says, Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect. He's calling us to a deeper heart righteousness. Towards God's law.

[23 : 59] Towards how we worship God. In our attitude towards money, where Jesus is a greater treasure. Towards other people, where we're slow to judge and we're quick to forgive.

So he's calling us away from the legalism that was around in his day and in our day. It's all about surface and there's no heart commitment. He's also warning us against the idea of license.

Well, if I'm saved by grace, I can just do whatever I want. No. We are to be careful to obey. Jesus calls us to live out the Sermon on the Mount because he is both our Savior, the one who saves us from our sin by dying for us, and he is our teacher who teaches us and shows us how to live within his kingdom.

But this sermon is also a blueprint for life in the Father's family. There's a couple of New Testament scholars, Jonathan Pennington and Ulrich Luzz, who've done some work on this recently, and they recognize that at the center of the Sermon on the Mount stands the Lord's Prayer.

And in a very real sense, the key to living the Sermon on the Mount is the Lord's Prayer. So the good news of Christianity is that God is creator, and we were made in God's image to know God.

[25 : 26] The relationship with God is possible, but because of our sin, because of our turning our back on God, there is separation. We stand justly under God's judgment.

But God, in his grace, has sent his son Jesus, and Jesus has lived a perfect life for us as our representative and substitute, and then he died on the cross, taking the penalty, taking the punishment that we deserve, and then he rose again in victory.

With the result that, when we trust in Jesus, our sins are forgiven, we have eternal life, and we are adopted into God's family.

We are invited to call God, our Father in heaven. And then, we are called to live out the Father's family values.

So we pray, your kingdom come, your will be done. So we cannot live the Sermon on the Mount without calling God, our Father in heaven.

[26 : 28] And so to read the Sermon on the Mount is to recognize, here is Jesus' grand design for how to live in the kingdom of God. And the parable, at the end, reinforces that, because it calls us, once again, to build wisely, to both listen and do, the word of God.

And so one thing that certainly reminds us, as a church, is that we must always prioritize a discipleship that involves hearing and doing, because that's the only kind of discipleship there is.

So let's think about the parable now, and let's think about the importance of building on the right foundations secondly. So chapter 7, and verse 24 to 27, we have that parable.

And it's a very simple parable in one sense. We have two builders, and we have two construction projects. One builder is described as wise, one is described as a fool.

Just to help us get a sense of the kind of project that Jesus invited his hearers to imagine, in Jesus' day, archaeology tells us that many of the houses were either one or two stories high, rough masonry on the outside, and the foundations were cut into the bedrock.

[27 : 48] That's important. Also, when we remember the weather in the region, for those of us who are interested in weather, and we have some, a little bit of weather trivia, Jerusalem and London, three different places, but get around about the same annual rainfall, 22 and a half inches, give or take.

London gets that over 300 days. So you get wet days, you get drizzly days, you get sort of overnight showers. Jerusalem gets it in 50 days.

What does that tell us? When the rain falls, it falls heavy and it falls hard. They have a wet season, which in Jesus' day, brought storms that were very destructive, which made it essential that whenever you built something, you built it with a foundation.

Everybody knew that. So why is that a foolish builder? So in any parable of Jesus, one of the things to be looking out for, if we want to understand what's the point that Jesus is trying to make, we try and look for the surprising detail.

And the surprising detail is in verse 26. 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. Why is that surprising?

[29 : 03] Because nobody upon nobody builds their house with no foundation. It's just nobody does it. This is folly. And nobody would do it. But regardless, one storm comes and there are two different outcomes.

So Jesus is talking about two ways to live and those two ways to live have two different outcomes. The one house, the one life stands, the other falls. Now during that building process, if we'd arrived after the sort of initial construction phase, perhaps the walls are halfway up, if you were sort of walking past each building site, the foolish person may have seemed so equally skilled and equally efficient as the wise because the foundation or the lack of foundation was unseen until the storm came and the storm exposed that vital lack.

The way we might think about it, he exposed the fact that he's a cowboy builder. He's trying to take shortcuts and he lacks true wisdom. So that's the parable and it's quite easy to understand but it's important for us to think about what point Jesus is making because it's really important for us to think about what foundation is my life, my life built on.

One thing, one point, the right foundation needs right hearing. So as so often in Jesus' stories and his teaching, he teaches by ways of contrast.

That's how he gets his point across. And here, what's the contrast between the wise and the fool? The wise man, we're told in verse 24, hears the words of Jesus and puts them into practice whereas the foolish man hears but doesn't.

[30 : 51] The basic point being that God's word is not for information only. We don't come to church just to discover some facts. We don't read our Bible to grow in head knowledge.

Jesus wants transformation. Transformation of our heart and our mind, our will and our actions. So imagine these men today, both of them coming to church on a Sunday, absolutely.

Both of them reading their Bibles, listening to sermons, perhaps serving on the same rotas. But only one truly obeys. Only one has a heart that is fully committed to Jesus as Lord and King.

The right foundation involves right listening. It involves recognizing that Jesus must both be my savior from sin and my teacher for how to live in God's world as a child of God.

That's the only right foundation and it involves that right listening. This parable also reminds us that the right foundation is a deep foundation.

[32 : 03] It won't do to just build on the surface. It takes us to that imagery that we've been singing about and reading about at the beginning. In the Old Testament, God was described as the rock, especially in the book of Psalms.

Eternal, immovable, strength, salvation. He's the rock of ages, the one to shelter in, the one to build a life on. And then Jesus came in his ministry and he came calling people back to God, calling people to himself, calling people to his word.

Do we hear the claims of Jesus? To build your life on me and my word is to stand in the end. In a sense, that claim to God, to be God.

Jesus came and he announced the kingdom of God is near because the king had come to establish his kingdom. He called the people to repent, to turn from sin, to turn to follow Jesus, to believe the good news that he was the promised king and savior.

He called the people to find treasure in heaven, not to live for the stuff of this life, but rather to pursue what is eternal. And ultimately, he wanted the people to find their true joy in him, recognizing there's nothing better than eternity in the presence of the Lord Jesus.

[33 : 19] Jesus. And Jesus also calls us to trust him as the one who lives out the sermon that he taught, that he preached.

I thought about that in Easter. Jesus is the one who practices what he preaches. Jesus is the one who came as the light revealing the glory of God into this world filled with the darkness of sin.

Jesus is the only one who always sought the kingdom of his father, who always pursued the will of his father. Jesus is the one who on the cross loved and prayed for his enemies.

He's willing to die to make enemies friends. And this parable is calling us to build our life on this Jesus. Because the only alternative is that we're simply building a life for ourselves.

And what we need to understand through the Bible, and we sang it as well in Psalm 62, that all of our work, all of our achievement, all the glory that we might attain will be swept away in the end by death.

[34 : 28] those things that are not Jesus that we are building our identity on, they are in reality as fragile as a spider's web. And they will not stand.

And what we need, and Jesus calls us to this, we need solid rock. We need Jesus as Savior and Lord. And another thing when it comes to building on the right foundations, think about the words of Jesus.

Right foundations means a lifetime of discipleship. This hearing and putting into practice, this isn't a one-off thing. This isn't a, I remember a number of years ago I prayed a prayer and I committed my life to Jesus.

It's not, I can look back and remember the day of my baptism, perhaps if we were baptized when we were older. It's not a one-off thing. It's a new way of life. It's a new king and a new kingdom and submitting to his authority day upon day upon day.

We can connect that with the baptisms that we had today and families as spiritual units. It's a reminder that our goal as parents is both to teach and model a life of following Christ.

[35 : 42] To hear the words of Jesus should remind us too of our priorities as a church. Reminds us of the goal of our Sunday services. It's the goal of all our discipleship groups through the week.

we want to help one another to be wise towards God and not to be foolish. That we would hear and that we would do the word of God.

So as we begin our community groups again, let me invite you to encourage you to commit to one of those so that together we might hear and do together. This parable calls us to commitment to passionate commitment to Jesus as Lord.

I read a very striking it was actually just a very striking sentence or a couple of sentences from a professor of theology in the States. He said that as a society and I think we can include the church in this we have become passionate about the trivial and apathetic about the vital.

Think about what excites our own hearts. Isn't it sadly the case that we get more excited about what's happening in the world of sport or the world of television and entertainment about our plans and prospects than we are about knowing Jesus as Lord.

[37 : 08] About spending time in his word. About spending time in worship. I think one of the challenges coming out of pandemic is to pray for that grace to fight for godliness.

To fight for passion for Jesus again. Because it was so easy for apathy to say. And it's important for us to be passionately committed to Jesus to be ready for the storms.

And let's turn there next. Final thing to say is that this parable calls us to prepare for the stress test. To prepare for the storm that will come.

So going back to Japanese engineering the number of storm seasons they have make it apparent to them that they need to build with earthquakes in mind.

They need to build with foundations that are able to withstand storms. Jesus says a wise builder is ready for the storms that come.

[38 : 12] Ready for the storm that will come. Not if it comes but when. What storm did he have in mind? And why should we all pay attention to his wisdom?

So perhaps in our minds we hear storms and we think when we talk about it the storms of life. Whether that's grief or unemployment, illness, relationship breakdown.

Those storms are real and painful and they do serve that purpose often of exposing, revealing what our life is really built on. But I don't think that's the storm that Jesus is talking about.

Most likely this storm is pointing us forward to the day of judgment. Now why say that? It's because the context of the parable comes with these final three warnings that we read.

So if you've got your Bible you can look at chapter 7 and verses 13 to 14 and Jesus warns about direction. He says make sure you enter through the narrow gate. There's one way it's a hard way it's the way of the cross but it's the way to life but there's a broad way there's a way of comfort there's a way most people choose but that way leads to destruction.

[39 : 24] That's final judgment language. And then in verses 15 to 20 he warns them about influence so he says watch out for false prophets. He says watch out that you're not a bad tree bearing bad fruit because what does he say?

Verse 15 every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. That's final judgment language. And then he says be careful that you're not just saying you're following Jesus but you're actually doing his will.

He says not everyone who says to me Lord, Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven but rather some will hear I never knew you. Away from me you evil doers.

To be away from Jesus, to be away from all that is good and light and love. That's final judgment language. And so Jesus is warning about the importance of building on the right foundation.

Because he says in verse 25 that when the rain came down and the streams rose and the winds blew and beat against the house of the wise man it did not fall because it had its foundation on the rock.

- [40 : 37] But in verse 27 when the storm came and the winds blew and beat against the house of the fool it fell with a great crash. Jesus' point is that the storm will come.
- We will stand before Jesus the judge one day. Are we ready for that day? That stress test that will ultimately and finally reveal the foundation of our life.
- And so Jesus' sermon and Jesus' story has that shocking ending. Why? Because we need this. We need to be reminded to continue trusting and loving Jesus.
- Or we need to be woken up to see the serious eternal significance of choosing to reject Jesus. Perhaps we find ourselves laying foundations and preparing for so much.
- We make good financial plans and plans for our family's future. Perhaps we plan for our fitness or future holidays. But do we plan to do with our faith?
- [41 : 51] To do with our eternal future? So often we can find ourselves simply drifting without ever thinking. Drifting towards death and drifting towards that day of judgment.
- We live in a society that by and large has lost that sense of God. Lost the sense of sin and judgment. Lost the sense of eternal reality. And because of that, there's a sense of not having the need to be prepared for death, to be prepared for judgment.
- And also there is no solid foundation for hope. As Christians we have a hope that lasts beyond death. And so Jesus issues this loving warning to be ready before the ultimate stress test comes.
- An invitation to build on the solid rock today, to trust Jesus as creator and king, to follow him and to follow his plan, to build our life on Jesus, on the salvation that he has provided, and the wisdom from God that he taught.
- Think about Jesus in relation to this sermon. He is the one who lived the perfect life for us. He is and will always be the one truly wise man. The one who was perfect like his father.
- [43 : 09] The one who perfectly kept the whole law and who came to save sinners. Who came to save foolish people like us. Who would choose by ourselves to build a life far from God and his ways.
- Dying for us in order to save us. Jesus willingly facing the storm of God's judgment, entering the darkness of the cross, feeling the father's judgment blow and beat on him, feeling abandoned by his father so that we never have to feel that.
- So we never have to experience the judgment of God if we trust in him. The Jesus who rose for us, who passed his great stress test and in his eternal life there is for us the guarantee of our eternal life that just as he stands so we will stand in his presence to enjoy him forever if our faith is in him.
- So this parable calls us to trust him, trust him as solid rock for now and for eternity to follow his commands that we might be safe and secure when the storm comes.
- Let's pray together briefly. Father we thank you for this simple yet powerful story that Jesus told and Lord as we consider and we pray that you'd help us to keep upon reflecting on it help us to reflect on who Jesus is and what he has provided in his salvation and in his teaching all that we need for a life of faith and a life of godliness and to secure our eternal life.
- [45 : 02] Lord help us to reflect on what our own life is built on, where our priorities really lie, what we give our time and attention and joy to and Lord help us to remember the realities of death and judgment as hard as they may be that we would hear the loving warning of Jesus, that we would be prepared so that we might stand and so that we might enjoy eternity in the presence of our loving king.
- And it's in his name that we pray. Amen. Now let's close our time singing the classic hymn Rock of Ages and let's stand together to sing.