

What will you build your life on

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- [0 : 0 0] So my name's Dave. I'm one of the pastors here. A warm welcome to you if you're visiting. So during the winter holidays last year, my wife, Emma, and I, we were in Mogo.
- I don't know if you know where Mogo is, but it's near Batemans Bay on the south coast. And we really love strolling the street, basically is one street, of Mogo.
- And it's just rustic and quirky shops. It's really leisurely. There was art galleries. We bought these little Aboriginal painted boomerangs that you stick to your fridge.
- They were cool. We just strolled the streets. There was bookshops, other art galleries, and there was fudge. Fudge, that's right.
- It was delicious. Maple and walnut, Will. Maple and walnut fudge. That was one of our highlights. So in a safe and beautiful part of our country, Mogo was life-giving.
- [1 : 1 2] But as you know, the bushfires have now devastated that area, that town, leaving many houses and businesses in ruins. Just south of Mogo, I read an article about a man who built his house 40 years ago.
- Now, he was prepared. He had a large area of the bushland surrounding his house backburned. Backburned. So confident was he that he was prepared that two years ago, he decided to stop paying for his house insurance.
- And now everything is destroyed. And now everything is destroyed. Except for this lower level of stones. Now, your heart goes out to him, doesn't it?
- None of us want to experience that. And I think he had an amazing attitude. He's recorded saying, we're all upset, obviously. But it's not the end of the world.
- We're alive. But he must be kicking himself, right? He must be kicking himself that he didn't keep his insurance.
- [2 : 2 7] Whatever his house was worth, he just lost it in an instant. It's really easy to say that in hindsight, isn't it?
- If we saw him a year ago with the thousands of dollars that he'd saved, I wonder what we would think of him then.
- It only looks foolish now because the bushfires have come through. So what about you? Are you a wise or a foolish person? It's almost impossible to tell in good times, isn't it?
- I think we Aussies love to live in the moment. We love the present moment we're in. We don't want to think about the future. But God forewarns each one of us that a dreadful storm is coming.
- [3 : 3 9] Jesus warns us. Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.
- And as the children's talk does help us feel the impact of this. 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. 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.

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. Now what's this story about?

It's about our entire life. Whether or not we are building our life on solid foundations. Whether like the man from Mogo, we're prepared for the times of crisis that this life throws at us.

[4 : 47] But also are we prepared for the final crisis? This final crisis is that we all must meet God face to face after we die.

We all must. And we have to give him an answer for the life we've lived. It's going to be like meeting a hurricane.

The rain fell. The floods came and the wind beat against every life that has been built. One person will stand, the other will fall.

What's the difference? We're told nothing. Nothing about the houses themselves. Except one thing.

The basis they're built on. The foundation. The story challenges each one of us to pause and examine our own lives.

[5 : 54] What are you building your life on? What is central to your life? What must you have for your well-being? What are you striving to keep and to have more of?

Do you look to romance? If you have that person's attention and affection, then whatever else happens, you'll be okay.

Do you look to money? Do you look to your accomplishments? Do you look to your accomplishments? Do you look to your work or your family?

Do you look to your possessions? Are these things solid enough to be the basis of your life?

The problem with all these things is that they're fragile. Loved ones can let us down.

[6 : 58] We can fail. and suddenly our accomplishments don't look so good anymore. Our health can be taken from us in a moment.

But when the sun is shining, our life may look solid and really good from the outside. But it will be left exposed when God's storm hits.

But like a bushfire, once it is over, the land is revitalised.

It has new and abundant growth. In a similar way, God says that once the final storm is over, he is going to remake everything to be permanent and good, only good as it was always meant to be.

Jesus calls this the kingdom of heaven. It's coming. At this point, you might be thinking that I'm implying that the religious person is safe and can have confidence to enter the kingdom of heaven and endure that storm.

[8 : 20] But religious actions are just as shaky ground as anything else. I think it's worse. It's worse because the person is fooling themselves into thinking that they're pleasing God.

Listen to what Jesus says from verse 21. You can see it on the back of your handout. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

On that day, when we face God, on that day, Jesus says, many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do mighty works in your name?

And then will I declare to them, I never knew you. Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.

These are the people who put their confidence in the public religious things they do. Lord, I knew all the right words and the doctrines to say in the church.

[9 : 35] Lord, I preached about you. Lord, I went to church regularly. Lord, I gave so much money to the church. Lord, I volunteered so much time for you.

I never knew you. Depart from me. They are dreadful words. I do not want to hear them.

When God's storm comes, the person basing their life on religious acts will fall. Never to rise again.

So if the religious person doesn't have any hope, who does? Let's go back to the story of the two house builders.

There are only two types of people. There's no middle ground. What's the difference between the wise and foolish person? Now, I'm not the sharpest tool in the shed.

[10 : 48] Sometimes I feel really foolish. Foolish. Like when I was at a family gathering the other day and the topic turned to politics. I had nothing to say.

I felt like a fool. Or when renovating our kitchen and Brendan gives me instructions, I feel like a fool.

There's moments that just really highlight what I don't know. But knowledge and experience isn't Jesus' measure of a wise or foolish person.

And I'm thankful for that. What's the difference? Compare verse 24 and 26 with me. Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them.

And the other group, everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them. Notice that both of them hear Jesus' words. Again, coming to church, hearing Jesus' words is not enough.

[11 : 59] Religious activity is not the difference. The wise person treats Jesus as their Lord over their entire lives and wants to do what he says.

The foolish person, whether religious or atheist, they build their lives ignoring him while chasing other things. Now that sounds a bit arrogant of Jesus, doesn't it?

That our future depends on whether we obey him or not. If I said that your life depends on obeying all that I say, what would you think of me? I'm guessing not very good things.

So who does Jesus think he is? He spoke as if he was God.

Let me just give you a taste of some of the commands he had just given before telling this story. You have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not murder and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.

[13 : 21] God gave the command in the Old Testament, do not murder. If you do, you deserve punishment. Back then, the punishment was the death penalty and whatever followed after death.

Would you agree with me that that is a really good law? It brings safety and stability to our society. It allows us to thrive. But hear what Jesus does to God's law.

You have heard that it was said, you shall not murder. But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.

You have heard that it was said, you shall not commit adultery. Again, I think we would all agree that this is a good commandment.

It brings security, stability to our families. But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery in his heart.

[14 : 46] You have heard that it was said, you shall love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.

There's much more that Jesus teaches, but I'll sum it up with this one line. He says, you therefore must be perfect as your heavenly father is perfect. Jesus wants my heart and my mind to be perfect, let alone my words and what I do.

I imagine like me, when you hear Jesus' words, you're thinking, who can possibly do that? You could hear Jesus calling us to be perfect and think, it's impossible.

No one can do it. So that's unfair. Or you can look at your life and think, yeah, I'm not perfect. But I'm still responsible for that.

Jesus' words hit me hard. But, if I was to do them, they are the right and good way to live. if a perfect standard is right and good, then of the wise and foolish builders, I am the fool.

[16 : 36] I am the fool. I deserve to fall. If you're feeling like you've got no solid ground to stand on before God, if you fear that God's day of testing is going to reveal how far you are from perfect, that nothing you've done makes you confident of entering the kingdom of heaven, then you are ready to build your life on the rock.

Until you admit that you are a fool, you cannot be wise. Until you fear that you deserve to fall, you can't be safe.

all the ways we've tried to make ourselves feel safe and secure with our money and accomplishments and relationships, when we realise that these things won't hold us, they won't work, only then can we turn to the one person who can really give us life and security.

This is Jesus' promise to you and me. Here's the good news. Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

It's not the good person who enters the kingdom of heaven. Blessed is the poor in spirit. who knows they've got nothing to offer. Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

[18 : 36] Immediately after saying these things, Jesus came across a man who had a skin disease all over him. the diseased and unclean man knelt before Jesus and said, Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean.

Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. I am willing. Be clean. Be clean. man and immediately the man was clean.

This man is like us. All the ways we've fallen short of what is good and right has made our conscience dirty before God. But Jesus not only shows us how far we are from perfect, but he is also the one with the power to reach out his hand to see your conscience and say, I am willing.

Be clean. You can be 100% sure that you're clean because God's own son took the fall that we should have taken when he died on the cross.

And he rose to life again to give you the most solid and unshakable ground to stand on before God because he alone was perfect like his heavenly father.

[20 : 11] And he gives to us his perfection, his perfect standing before God. Jesus is the solid rock. When we acknowledge that we fail to live the way we should, when we recognize that all our attempts of trying to get safety in money and relationships or achievements or religious acts are going to fail us, when we turn and listen to Jesus, looking to him for forgiveness, wanting to do what he says because his ways give us life, this is the wise person who builds their life on Jesus.

Jesus. And when the storm hits, you won't fall. Not because of the house, but because of the rock you're on.

You've built your life on the one who can save you. Instead of hearing the words, depart from me, you'll hear the words, welcome home. Welcome home. God's severe storm is coming.

Will you keep building on sand? Amen.