

Wise and Foolish Builders

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Preacher: Andrew Moody

[0 : 0 0] This is the evening service at Holy Trinity on the 16th of June 2002 The preacher is Andrew Moody His sermon is entitled Wise and Foolish Builders And is based on Luke chapter 6 verses 43 to 49 Why don't I start by praying for us and for me and for my voice as you can hear is a bit cactus Lord God we pray that you'll be with us as we look at your word together Thank you so much for sending your son Jesus into the world To speak your words and to reveal your truth Please help us to understand what he said and to believe it Please help me to speak it faithfully and clearly and interestingly And please help my voice not to give out

Amen For a while at least It's not that difficult to fake being a Christian For a while It's easy to make all the outward signs of being a follower of Jesus Maybe Christianity is something that we've been brought up with We've gone along to church for all our lives And we just go along with it Maybe we go along to church for the social contact Because we have friends there And it's a fun place to be There's good activities to do Nice people Maybe we're after a boyfriend or a girlfriend Or something like that And so there's attractions in going to church Maybe we think of Kind of faking being a follower of Jesus There's an insurance policy We don't really want to follow Jesus We don't really want to live our lives his way But at the same time

We kind of think to ourselves That we might as well go on to church And do the activities Go through the motions So that Well we're right with God nonetheless Even though we don't really want to live that way If you've been hanging around a church Or around Christians for a while You've probably seen this kind of thing happen People who've grown up in Christian families And seem to be keen to participate and go along But after a while When they get to an age where they can decide for themselves They simply decide that they don't want to be a part of it They drift away or just stop going to church Or maybe you've come across more shocking instances Where Christians in leadership have been faking it They have a reputation as being people who can teach Or lead God's people And they're people who are regarded as being faithful And suddenly it appears that there's a whole other side to their lives Where Jesus has had no rule whatsoever

Some sexual scandal Or some corrupt dealings with money I think the most shocking and appalling example I've ever heard of Was in a church where my parents went for a while And one of the elders turned out to have been Both a child molester and a murderer An outrageous display of hypocrisy Faking being a Christian Faking being a follower of Jesus The temptation to be a fake follower of Jesus To follow Jesus for merely outward reasons Or for ulterior motives For false reasons Has always been around It was certainly around in Jesus' day Even more so in fact Because there were so many interesting and exciting things Happening around Jesus back in those days Jesus was doing miracles He could go along for free medical treatment Jesus was feeding large groups of people A lot of people, if you look at John 6 Were going along to try and get free meals off Jesus Jesus had harsh and incisive things to say

Against the religious leaders They would try and attack him And he would cut them down to size With a few well-chosen words and questions It was exciting being around Jesus Because Jesus knew what was what And spoke with authority Jesus created a religious buzz around himself Huge crowds followed him People possessed by demons Would fall down in front of him Frothing at the mouth And protesting that he was the Holy One of God And the demons would be exorcised from them It was exciting being around Jesus And so Jesus attracted a whole lot of people Who were there for the buzz Who were there for the free food Who were there for the medical treatment Who were there for all kinds of reasons But didn't really want to follow Jesus And as we look at Luke 6 And you've been looking at it over the last few weeks Jesus, in the back of his mind And in the front of his teaching, I guess Is always talking to people who are double-minded When they come to him People who want to show up

[5 : 09] And be associated with Jesus Hang around Jesus But don't really want to live out what he says And as we come to these closing verses Of this great sermon He has some great warnings For people who want to follow him only outwardly Or who want to be associated with him For the wrong reasons I'll just have a drink The first warning that Jesus has Is that it's what we are inside That counts He makes his point simply, I guess Through a metaphor from nature Just as plants and trees Are known by the fruit they produce, aren't they?

You recognise a fig tree Because it produces figs You recognise a grapevine Because it produces grapes Plants produce According to what they are They reveal what kind of plant they are By what they grow on the outside Jesus is talking about humans, of course And to make it clear He then goes on to spell it out In verse 45 The good person Out of the good treasure of the heart Produces good And the evil person Out of evil treasure Produces evil For it is out of the abundance Of the heart that the mouth speaks Obviously what Jesus is saying Is that we reveal Who we are on the inside By what comes out of our mouths And the way we act I think in our society We have a belief That there's quite a Strong wall between What we are in our thoughts And in our private world And our outward actions

We're very big on privacy In our society People want to be able To be secret About what they do In the privacy of their own homes And watch on TV Or videos Or view on the internet People don't want Anybody to know about it Because they think that What you are on the inside What you are in the privacy Of your own home What you do And what you think Has nothing to do With who you are on the outside Who you are publicly The same comes in the way We think about politicians It doesn't matter How a politician Or a journalist Or any other public figure Acts in their private world Their private relationships With people How they treat their wives Or family Or husbands As long as they do the job In a satisfactory way In the public sphere Jesus is saying There is a fundamental connection Between what we do In the outside world To what happens In our hearts And inward lives Jesus is saying I think that

There is a great reason To be afraid If we are corrupt inside If we are serving ourselves On the inside It will bear fruit On the outside What we are on the inside Will become known By what comes out of our mouths And how we act Each tree is known By its own fruit Figs are not gathered From thorns Nor are grapes Picked from a bramble bush In other words Jesus is saying Unkind words Dirty jokes Gossip All the things That come out of our mouths Or that characterise our lives That are lived for ourselves They don't come from nowhere They show what we are like On the inside Jesus is saying If that's what we are like On the inside It will come out We can fake it For a while We can pretend To be followers of Jesus

We can go along And if we shut up A little bit It will look like We are okay But those who know us Those who spend time With us in the long term Will eventually see What we are like It will eventually come out What kind of people We are on the inside We can't disguise it forever Each tree is known By its own fruit Jesus is offering Then a great warning That we can't hide forever Who we really are But he also offers us A great incentive Jesus you see Speaks of figs and grapes Figs and grapes In the Old Testament Are symbols of God's blessing God's prosperity Given to people Who trust in him And who enjoy his presence And character Jesus is saying That if we want to Enjoy God's blessings If we want to Enjoy his character And his being close to us His work in our lives Then we need to be Working on a character

[10 : 05] On the inside Which will produce that fruit It won't come from nowhere But it is possible To have a character Which will bear these things A great warning And a great incentive The good person Out of the good The good treasure Of the heart Produces good And the evil person Out of the evil treasure Produces evil So what are we like On the inside What kind of character Are we cultivating Jesus is saying That what we are On the inside Will come out It will either bear Thorns and thistles I guess Or figs and grapes Signs of God's blessing If I could look Into your life Into your private world Into the world Of your thoughts And desires And aspirations What would I see?

Would I see A love for Jesus And an eagerness To see his work Happening in your life Or through your life? Or would I see Somebody so preoccupied With the things of this world And enjoying it That you've got No real time for Jesus And following him?

What characterises Your attitude Towards other people? Is it gentleness? Is it love? Is it forgiveness For those who hurt you? Is it an eagerness To see good Happen in the lives Of other people?

Or is there As we so often feel A secret pleasure In hearing about The misdemeanours Of other people Or the misfortunes That they suffer? Is there a bitterness Towards people Who have done you wrong?

Are you ready to suffer? If I could see inside Are you ready to suffer A mockery Or hardship Or going without For the sake Of following Jesus? Or are you so caught up In living for the comforts Of this world That there's no room For suffering Or costly obedience To Jesus?

[12 : 03] Jesus is saying That what is inside Will come out People will know it It will become apparent And it will make a difference To the blessings That we enjoy Or do not enjoy From God We must cultivate A godly character Jesus doesn't leave it At that though And say Just be good Be good for goodness sake Be good or else Jesus actually tells us How to begin Cultivating This kind of character And as we read on We find out How we do that It's all about You see Listening to Jesus' words And putting them Into action Why do you call me Lord, Lord And do not do What I tell you He says to the people Who are gathered around him Who aren't really Interested in following him I will show you What somebody's like Who comes to me He hears my words And acts on them

That one is like A man building a house Who dug deeply And laid the foundation On rock When a flood arose The river burst Against that house But could not shake it Because it had been Well built But the one who hears And does not act Is like a man Who built a house On the ground Without a foundation When the river Burst against it Immediately it fell And great was the ruin Of that house The key to cultivating A character that produces Blessings in our lives And that is worth Observing from the outside The key to living A life like that Is hearing Jesus' words And putting it into action Do you see what Enormous claims Jesus is making For himself People often want to Think of Jesus As a wise teacher A guy who's got A few useful things To say And we can pick And choose Which ones we want

To listen to And get rid of the rest Jesus is saying That his words Are so essential So powerful That to hear his words And act on them Is to construct a life Which will withstand Any catastrophe And moreover To hear his words And reject them Is to build a life On nothing Is to set yourself up For disaster At the first Sign of trouble A house without foundation Jesus is making Great claims for himself Here As he Draws together These images Of a stream Of a growing plant Of God's word He's really Got in the back Of his mind I think References to Psalm chapter 1 Where the psalmist Speaks of the Blessedness Of the man Who listens To God's law And meditates on it

And how that person Is like a plant Growing beside A stream of water Bearing fruit Jesus is putting Himself on a par With the Old Testament Law He is saying That his words Are God's words We can't disregard Them We can't take Them lightly There is too much At stake here What a great Challenge this is To our generation Not a day Goes by It seems Without Some self Appointed Church spokesman Or spokeswoman Telling us You see That we need to Fix The message Of Christianity We need to Adjust it To make it More acceptable We need to Get rid of The nasty bits The bits about Judgment or Hell We need to Abandon our Simple minded Belief in Miracles Or the God Who could act Supernaturally In the world We need to Chuck out The Bible's Outmoded Teachings on Sex and Sexuality We need to

Get rid of Those passages Where Jesus Says that Nobody comes To God Except through Him The exclusivity Of Christianity Is a scandal People are Always willing To tell us That we need To chop Those bits Out of Christianity Jesus is Saying That if we Start pruning Back on His words Disregarding His words We are Setting ourselves Up for Complete disaster Churches and Individuals that Start pruning The Bible Start disregarding Parts of Jesus' words Start setting Themselves up As judges And authorities Above God's Words Are setting Themselves up For complete And utter Ruin Which is Exactly what You see If you go And visit A church Where you're Told that The Bible Has bits Of God's Word and Bits of Human words All mixed In together And we can Pick and Choose which Bits we'll Follow Sooner or Later that Church will Collapse Probably Quickly One of Things I Observe Pretty soon Working with Students Is that The surest Way to Guarantee That your Children Will give Up the Faith Is to Teach them

[17 : 06] That very Thing That the Bible is Partly the Words of Humans and Partly the Words of God And that You can Weed out The bad Bits and Be left With the Good Bits Sooner A person Who's Brought up With that Will give Up on Christianity Altogether Because if You're the One who Gets to Pick and Choose what God says Then all You do is Go to the Bible and Find out What you Already Believed in The first Place Why not Just start With your Own thoughts It's a Recipe for Disaster But Jesus Is not Just saying The church Attendances Will drop If we Teach this Stuff Or that We'll Give up Calling Ourselves Christians The great Disaster The flood That Jesus Is talking About here Is the Judgment of God The judgment Day when Jesus Himself And God's Angels will Return to Judge the World And that Those who Have responded To Jesus Will spend Eternity with Him and Those who Have rejected Him will Spend eternity Apart from Him If we want

Evidence that This is exactly What Jesus is Talking about We only have To look at A parallel Passage in Matthew 7 Let me read Matthew 7 Verses 21 To 23 Jesus says 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 In Heaven On that Day Many will Say to Me Lord Lord Did we Not Prophecy In Your Name And cast Out Demons In Your Name And do Many Deeds Of Power In Your Name Then I Will Declare To Them I Never Knew You Go Away From Me You Evil Doers What a Warning Jesus Is Making Here How we Respond To Jesus And To The Words Of God Through Him Is How we Will Spend It Corresponds To How we Will Spend Eternity Whether We Will Be Let Into

Heaven Or Not And It's A Warning For Us Here At Holy Trinity You See I Speak Of The Liberal Approach To The Bible The People Take The Scissors To The Bible And Cut Out The Bad bits But Jesus Isn't Just Speaking That It's Not Enough To Know The Bible It's Not Enough Even To Hear Good Sermons On The Bible It's Great To Know The Bible It's Great To Believe The Bible Jesus Is Telling Us That We Have To Act On His Words 46 Why Do you Call me Lord Lord And Do Not Do What I Tell You Do We Act On Jesus Words Do We Take Advantage Of The Stuff That We Already Know About Jesus And About God Jesus Is Saying This Is The Thing Which Will Determine

Our Fate In This World And Ultimately Our Fate Before God For Eternity Do We Put Into Practice What We Know It's Great To Know A lot About God It's Great To Know And Believe Truth About Jesus Do We Act On It Do We Spend Time Thinking About What We Have Heard Recently In Sermons Or In Our Bible Reading Do We Spend Time Thinking About How That Will Make A Difference To Our Lives We We And We Grab Hold Of This Stuff That We Are Hearing And Put It Into Practice Jesus Is Saying That If We Do That That Our Lives Will Be Founded On The Very Bedrock Of God's Character And Word Unshakeable Lives Will Result From That Kind Of Living But If We Don't We're Like Houses Without Any Foundation Swept Away At The First Sign Of So Jesus

Is Offering Us Great Warnings And Great Incentives Isn't He Great Warnings About The Kind Of Lives That We Live Our Lives And Our Choices Have Great Significance The Way We Choose To Respond To Jesus And His Words The Kind Of Lives That We Cultivate Have Eternal And Massive Implications In A Sense It Lies Within Our Power To Enjoy God's Blessings And Grab Hold Of Them And Bear Fruit And Live Lives Which Are Full Of God's Activity And God's Power Being Displayed In Our Lives And It Lies Within Our Grasp To To Reject God's Power At His Presence To Just Fake Being Christians To Just Go Along Following Jesus For The Wrong Reasons It Lies In Our Power To Respond To Jesus Words With Faith And With Action And To Build A Life That Will Last Forever And

[22 : 12] It Lies Within Our Power To Reject Those Things Our Choices Are Significant And They Are Real Let's God God God Help Help To Make Wise Choices Lord Jesus Please Help us To Be People Who Bear The Fruit Of God's Blessings People Whose Lives Bear Figs And Grapes Not Thorns And Thistles Help us To Be People Who Endure Whose Lives Are Founded On Your Word We Thank You So Much Lord God For Jesus Words That They Are Reliable And Eternally Valuable And We Thank You For Jesus In His Name Amen