

In Times Like This

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[0 : 00] This is the evening service at Holy Trinity on the 5th of May 2002. The preacher is Jacob Kawashi.

His sermon is entitled In Times Like This and is based on Matthew 7.24-29.

I would just encourage us to see our Bible's opens with a passage to the right. We are wonderful display of drama.

I think everything is just summarized. This little planet is just worth. A policeman and a wise man. But I want to take us as we meditate on this very passage and consider the situations of things now.

[1 : 11] So if you are going to remember this story of the foolish man and the wise man, don't forget. We are going to look at it another topic in times like this.

in times like this. So we go ahead as we pray. loving and caring, Father, for the gift of this night and for the freedom to come before you.

And for the wonderful opportunity to even read from your words and to hear the interpretation coming from you. He says, thank you. Father, we ask you, God, that you visit us tonight and meet us individually at our points of need.

Every single soul that is here, Father, we ask you, God, that you reach out and touch each and every one of us in a special way. Touch us in a way that we will go out, not the same way we can eat.

Open our eyes to see the footprints of Christ Jesus and then implant our own. As wives, men and women, boys and girls, help us, God, to walk in paths of righteousness.

[2 : 27] We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Matthew chapter 7 Matthew chapter 7 It has to do with a situation where Jesus discovered that having said so many things, in the verses that followed this, verse 24, he has talked about the narrow gate and he told the people about the narrow gate and the wider gate and he told them how to go in for the narrow gate.

Of course, he told them that those who desire to go in through the wider gate are many. But he encouraged people to go through the narrow gate.

And he did not stop there. He went on to talk about the fruit, I mean the tree and its fruit. And then he also said that don't be surprised on the last day some people will say we perform miracles in your name.

We heal the sick and we even cast out demons. in your name. And he said I will say to them I never knew you. And in order to put everything together he now told them this little story or parable.

He said that those who hear the words of mine and put it into practice. So two things happen. Not only to hear but to put into practice that matters before God.

[4 : 04] and also hear these words of mine and put it into practice. I like the wise man. Most of the time I have been a preacher for the past 16 years now by the grace of God and most of the time the problem that we normally discover in any given situation of any church is that the problem is not that people have not been hearing the word of God.

But the problem is how many of the word of God we've had we've ever put into practice. And in most churches is the same. There was this new vicar who just received a transfer letter and he was asked to move to a new church.

And when he moved to the new church of course people were so happy yeah he's coming to that new church. I could remember when Paul announced that we've gotten another Paul who is coming.

Everybody was anxious looking for the coming of Paul. And in this same church Paul don't mind me here. And in this very same church the people they were eager looking forward for the coming of this new vicar.

And all kind of preparations were made. And he finally came. He went to the vicarage and looked at everything both in and out and he supervised I mean he he surveilled everything and came out and people could see that he was not really satisfied with one specific thing.

[5 : 50] In all the things that he had seen in the vicarage. So he quickly got his salmon ready. He arrived on Saturday got his salmon ready.

And on Sunday he climbed the pulpit and he preached from Malachi chapter 3. And when he preached from Malachi chapter 3 he was making emphasis on where God said to the people his people bring all the tithe into my house and let there be food in my house and put me to taste and see whether I will not bless you.

And the vicar was making emphasis let there be food in the house of the Lord let there be food in the house of the Lord. And he made all that emphasis and one week later he went and looked at his pantry there was no any food that came to the house of the Lord.

The same salmon he repeated and making emphasis look God is saying bring food into the house of God and let there be food in the house of God. He knows quite already that when there is food in the house of God traditionally in the African church whenever there is any thanksgiving that comes into the church in the form of either foodstuff or even live animals it goes straight to the vicar in church.

So you can see how some of us were eating chicken free and free of church in Nigeria. so he believed that the pantry in the vicar is not yet food and he preached this sermon the second time the third time and then the fourth time then the pupils were then came to him and he said what is wrong with you pastor since you came this is your fourth service with us and you are preaching the same sermon.

[7 : 54] Then the vicar said because all the members of the church they've had the sermon and yet they have refused to put it into practice. He said if you put it into practice there will be no food in the vicar there is no food in the vicar up to now.

And that is another thing. Hearing the word of God is different from putting it into practice.

We go back to look I mean to Matthew chapter 7 quickly as we look through it. If you look at Matthew chapter 7 verse 24 Jesus used the word therefore to connect everything he has been saying in the previous verses and he said everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man.

wise man is someone that everybody likes to be recognized with. I can remember when I was asked to act in a drama at the age of nine years old.

I can remember vividly because my father was not happy with that drama. and we were to act specifically on three different characters the wise man and the foolish man and the one who doesn't care at all so he is in between whether he is wise or foolish he doesn't care.

[9 : 37] and I could remember my father was seated there waiting to see what his son will pick and he said who would like to act the foolish man and I quickly put up my hand.

And my father took me back home when we got home and beat hell out of me. He said why on earth can't you pick something like a wise man? He decided to act a foolish man.

Nobody would like to be recognized. as a foolish person. No. I don't think a human being normal human being would like to be recognized as a foolish person.

A fool. No. And the Bible says that there are two sets of people. Those who always hear the word of God and they put them into practice.

They are the wise people. And on the other side there are those who hear the word of God quite alright but they never put into practice. We are going to look at them one after the other.

[10 : 41] So we are told here that the wise man decided to build his house and he built his house on a rock. That is a foundation.

He laid a foundation and he laid it on a rock and built his house on a rock. rock. Have you ever listened to somebody crying when something terrible has happened to him or to her?

Or maybe when the whole of the business is crumbling and the person is crying and he's saying oh I don't know what to do again.

That is the whole of my life. I have put in everything in that business. And that is the whole of my life. That is the reason why I'm leaving.

And it crumbles. So we are told that the wise man built his house upon a rock. The foolish man on the other side built his house upon the sun.

[11 : 55] And I want to challenge us tonight. I don't know what you are passing through. But in times like this I want to ask this question. What is that thing that is becoming so important in your life?

On what aspect of anything in this world you are making emphasis the more and the more and the more? What is that thing that tides the whole of your being that you cannot live without it? What is that thing that determines your reason of living? What is that thing that you can call the brave eye breathing in and out every second? In another word what are you building your life upon? Because in times like this we must be sure of what we are doing and where we are going. I am not saying that it is bad to get all the good things in this world.

world. But the story has a meaning that we must look at it and understand. The difference between the wise man and the foolish man who built his, both of them were builders, they both built their houses, but one built his house on the rock and the other one built his house on the sand.

[13 : 12] The irony of many of the things that is happening in this world today and the reason why many people are not understanding the reality of things they should understand today is that the society has changed and everything is changing and some things are supposed to be minor are now becoming major.

Some things that we are supposed not to emphasize more upon are becoming the emphasis of the society. Some things that people should not even go far away looking for them and are becoming things that people are not sleeping every night and day looking for such things.

So on what do you build your life? Two builders. Now let us look at it quickly. We are told that having finished their buildings what happened to it?

We are told that rain came. So unique. Why should rain come at this time?

rain? If I look at this story again, I kept asking myself, why is it that rain did not come when they were about to build the house?

[14 : 25] Why is it that rain did not come when they are in the process of building the house? Why is it that Jesus reserved the coming of the rain until both of them have completed their buildings? And we are told rain came down.

Just imagine that someone walked to you, and of course he is a well-known person in the whole of this Australia, maybe a billionaire, and we are in the peak of the coldest winter with snow all over. And imagine that this man comes to you and he says, look, I am giving you Monday to Friday night that you should build a small snow house outside your compound.

A small snow house that you will be able to squeeze yourself in it and sit down under it. And if you succeed in building this snow house, on Saturday in the morning I will come around.

And if I see you going into that snow house and sitting there comfortably okay, I will give you a bill of one million dollars. I know if that is being said to many of us, we will start walking that Monday.

[15 : 49] And everybody will struggle for the amount of snow you could lay your hands on it and build that snow house. And they will say, yes, you succeeded in building that snow house.

And you are so happy that everything is well. up. And 7.30 p.m. on Friday you were happy, you went out and looked at the house and it's everything ready.

And you are just waiting and watching and looking forward to Saturday morning for the man to come in the afternoon. 10 p.m.

in the night, you heard some sound of thunder. before you pronounce come, the rain has started coming.

Just imagine what will you do about your snow house? Will you run out and go and begin to cover it with so many things in order to protect your snow house because the next day the millionaire is coming to give you your one million deal?

[16 : 55] Or what will you do? and then the rain continues. We are told that then the rain came down and the rain came down and it did not stop there. Then the streams rose. The rain became so much that the streams rose.

The rivers are increasing. Everywhere is filling up. And everywhere is becoming overshadowed with water.

certainly your snow house will melt. No doubt about it. Even if you protect it from the rain that comes down, you cannot protect it from the rain that flows on the ground or the water that flows on the ground.

It might melt. It did not stop there. Then the wind blew. And we are told that the wind specifically beat against the house.

what are we saying and what is the word of God saying to us tonight? We are living in the world that is full of trouble whether we like it or not.

[18 : 05] The world that is full of crises. By mere listening at every single news, you will begin to hear one single terrible thing happening somewhere.

It might not happen here, but it might happen somewhere. and every news tells us that we are living in a world that is full of uncertainty.

We are not sure of what will happen next. We are not sure of where we are going. We are not sure of what will happen in two hours from now. News of crisis between different factions of groups, Hindus and Muslims, Muslims and Christians, news about what is happening between Palestinians and the Israelites, news about plane crashes, boats sinking down.

Every sort of things are happening. But in times like this I ask the question again, what type of a person you are? What type of a Christian you are?

What type of a person you are? Do you have a future? Are you thinking of something in the next 20, 40 years to come? Do we have future?

[19 : 29] And if we have future, we are told that these two men built their houses. One who built his house on the rock, he knew that he had a future. He knew that he needed a foundation.

And he knew that the best thing is the foundation. foundation. No matter what, if you don't have a strong foundation, the best, it is possible that the building will fall.

And of course, if we interpret what Jesus said about that foundation, the rock, of course, is Christ himself. Jesus is the only solution to any problem in this world. I want to challenge us.

As much as we go after money, as much as we go after education, as much as we go after anything in this world, if we have Jesus Christ as our foundation, if we have Jesus Christ as our Lord and our Savior, certainly we will be able to stand.

Now let us look at the irony of this life. The wind did not just blow against the house of the man who built his house on the sand. No. We are told that the wind blew on both houses.

[20 : 34] It beat against the house that is built on the rock and as well against the house that is built on the sand. And the sincerity of everything in this world that we are living is that you are not 100%, no one can say I am 100% free from crises that are happening all over.

Our lives are being surrounded by crises. What is that thing that you are really building your house upon?

Can you imagine that you put your effort in everything wrong? Only at the end of the journey you will be told that you have done everything wrong and upside down.

of course I am talking to students, imagine that you spend your time writing the essay and preparing for everything and at the end the lecturer will look at it and you cross it with red by row and you say sorry, you failed the course.

When we got married newly, I was trying to impress my wife in everything because she was then a student at the university and the university is about 30 minutes drive away from Kaduna.

[21 : 55] So she goes to school Monday to Friday and then most of the time if she is coming home for weekend, she tells me that I am coming home for weekend. So I know that she is coming home for weekend.

So from Monday to Thursday I will keep the house so untidy, so terrible. Everything will be scattered. but I know that by Friday evening immediately after her lectures, my wife will be on her way home.

And every Friday I will wake up as early as 5 a.m. and begin to prepare the whole house again. I make sure I put the pots the way they are supposed to be, I put everything the way they are supposed to be and clean the whole house.

And we were just in the mood of honeymoon. Everything was just wonderful. I could remember vividly we were not up to one month as married husband and wife.

So I wanted to surprise my wife. And of course the mistake she always makes is that she always sends a message and tells me she is coming. And I know she is coming. So she told me that she is coming this time early enough.

[23 : 04] And she is coming immediately after her Thursday lectures. And I knew about that one. I woke up that Thursday very early and I started putting everything in place.

And I did all I could. And finally I cooked the best meal I believe I have cooked in my life. And she came. The very moment my wife walked into the house she drilled the curtain and she said, did you really wash this curtain?

From the very first step she took to step into the house she complained about the curtain that was hanging by the door there. I am not sure you wash this curtain.

And she entered the bedroom she said, but why did you put the pillow this way? Why not put the pillow on this side? And she looked at the pillow. I was trying to give some surprises.

The color combination I was thinking I was doing a wonderful color combination. She said to me, the pillow, the pillowcase is not matching the bed sheet that you have put on the bed.

[24 : 15] I felt destabilized from everything that I thought I put in place. I think that was not enough. I quickly warmed the food and I said, here you are darling, time for a meal.

She took the first bite. She said, too much salt. The rice is not properly cooked. Everything I did that day.

Believe you me, my wife did not give me pass mark in any of them. But for me, I thought I had done the best. I thought I did all I could.

And I spent hours from 6 in the morning until around 4 p.m. when she came. I was busy trying to pick the smallest dirty pin I could see on the ground.

But my wife said to me, all that I did is not up to our standard. In another word, I put all my effort in doing everything and at the end, she was not impressed.

[25 : 24] Can you just imagine that you are born in a Christian home or you went about mingling with friends that are Christians and you live your life in a wonderful country like Australia.

You had good food from day one and you had good education from day one and you had the best of clothes you put on yourself from day one and you went to the best schools you could mention compared to other schools either in Africa or in any other third world country.

And you had the best thing all over and you became a human being and you become a man and a married woman and everything went smoothly. And then on the last day God said I never knew you. That would be terrible. That would be terrible. So as we draw across tonight I want to challenge you. What are you really building your life upon?

What is that force that is determining your reason for living? What is that thing that is taking the whole of your being, the whole of your thinking, the whole of your everything?

[26 : 39] Brothers and sisters it is good to have best cars, good cars, good homes, good food, everything good it is good to have them.

But the testing period is coming when the wind begins to blow, when the rain begins to come down, when the stream begins to rise, when everything begins to beat against your life.

what is that thing that will hold you? If everything will crumble in this world, what is that thing that you will still hold on to it? This story shows clearly that there is nothing in Australia or in Africa or any part of the world that is permanent.

Don't be deceived. There is nothing which is permanent. which is permanent. The best thing you are seeing all over the world, one day will come to an end. Nothing is permanent.

Do you hear the word of God and put into practice? Or you just hear the word of God and close the Bible and say, while it is the duty of Paul to preach, it is the duty of Paul to talk, it is the duty of anybody to preach?

[27 : 59] The Bible say, he who hears the word of God and put it into practice is like a wise man who built his house upon the rock.

Education is good, but education without Jesus Christ, it will crumble like the house of the man who built his house on the sand.

Money is good, but money without Jesus Christ, I am sorry to say it, it will take you to hellfire. It's good to have good friends, but to have good friends without Jesus Christ, it won't take you anywhere.

It's good to have the best of good food, but without Jesus Christ, the best of good food will never give life eternal. It is good to have the best of things in this world, but without Jesus Christ, it is gone.

good to have the best of life. What is that force that is determining your life? In another word, what is that thing that you hold as foundation, either of your marriage, your life, your business, your home, as children at home, what is that thing we hold as our foundation?

[29 : 39] The testing period is coming. Rain will come. Streams will rise. Wind will blow, and it will beat against every single soul.

But only those who have foundation on the rock will stand. Amen. Amen. JASP 1