

False Foundations

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[0 : 00] Isaiah chapter 28, 11 through 16. Line upon line, line upon line, here are little, there are little, and they may go and fall backward and be broken and sneered and taken.

Therefore, hear the word of the Lord, you scoffers, who rule this people in Jerusalem, because you have said, we have made a covenant with death, and with Seho, we have an agreement when the overwhelming whips passes through.

It will not come to us, for we have made lies our refuge, and in falsehood we have taken shelter. Therefore, thus said the Lord God, behold, I am the one who have laid as a foundation in Zion a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation.

Whoever believes will not be in haste. And the second one is Matthew chapter 7, verse 24 through 27.

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 the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and bare on that house.

[1 : 55] 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. Thank you very much, Michelle.

Well, this morning we are coming near to the end of our sermon series in the Sermon on the Mount.

And as Jesus was concluding the Sermon on the Mount, it's clear that he had some concerns.

And Jesus expresses these concerns in the form of warnings. Two weeks ago, we considered the first warning that Jesus gave, found in verses 15 to 20.

And it's a concern about false prophets. And Jesus warned his hearers against false prophets, saying, Beware of false prophets.

[3 : 07] And then lastly, we considered the second warning that Jesus gives as he concludes his Sermon on the Mount, is found in verses 21 to 23.

And his concern was about false assurance. The concern that on the day of judgment, many will be rudely awakened.

awakened to the fact that they were never true believers. That even though they called on the name of Jesus, and even though they engaged in religious activities in his name, they didn't belong to Jesus.

And Jesus would say to them, I never knew you. And so he says, Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter into the kingdom of heaven.

Brothers and sisters, he warned them. And by extension, he warns us. And now we have come this morning to the third warning that Jesus gives in these final words in the Sermon on the Mount.

[4 : 24] And the four verses that were just read to us. And these final words, Jesus warns that people like you and me, who hear his words, who gather on a morning like this morning, and sit under the hearing of his word, he gives us a warning.

And the warning, in essence, is that hearing is not enough. Jesus gives his warning in the form of two builders in a parable.

He refers to one builder as a wise man, and he built his house on the rock. And when the storms came, his house withstood the destructive force.

But Jesus also refers to another man. He calls him a fool. And he said that he built his house on the sand.

And when the storms came, his house came crashing down. And he has the inescapable point that Jesus is making.

[5 : 49] For us this morning, every person who is able to hear and understand is in one of these categories. Friends, there is no in-between.

There is no alternative category. Every one of us is in one of these two categories. We are hearing and obeying these words of Jesus, or we are merely hearing them.

And we are living our lives without regard for them. We are living our lives in disobedience to them. And those of us who live our lives with disobedience to what Jesus is saying, we are building on false foundations.

And so in our remaining time this morning, I want us to consider from this passage how we can build our lives on a true and a sure foundation rather than on a false and a sandy one.

So would you bow and pray with me? Heavenly Father, we are so grateful this morning that we are able to gather in this place.

[7 : 15] And Lord, in your divine providence, you have brought us all here. I pray that you would give us all the presence of mind that are being here this morning to hear your word and indeed to experience all that we will experience is not happenstance.

Lord, help us to posture our hearts to hear what you would say to us. Lord, most of all, would you grant us the ability to respond to what you say to us?

Would you help us all to recognize the gravity of the moment, the responsibility of this moment of sitting under your word?

And so would you draw near to us now, Lord, corporately and individually in ways that only you can. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. As I consider these concluding words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, we have one more sermon which is next week, but those will be the words of Matthew.

But we come to the end of the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount this morning. And here's how I would summarize them. True disciples of Jesus hear and obey his words.

[8 : 54] True disciples of Jesus both hear and obey his words. I think this is a faithful summary of these concluding words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, and I pray that you will see that in this morning's sermon.

For those of you who are taking notes, I have two very simple headings to organize my thoughts under. The first one is hearing Jesus.

In the context of these four verses, what does it mean to hear the words of Jesus? What does it mean when Jesus says, whoever hears these sayings of mine?

What does it mean by that? Jesus says, now to get to the meaning of what Jesus is saying, I want you to notice that two times in this passage, in verses 24 and 26, Jesus says, everyone who hears these words of mine.

So when Jesus refers to these words of mine, it's important to see that he is referring to the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus is referring to the body of teaching that he had given to those who were hearing him, and indeed, by extension, to those of us who are hearing him now.

[10 : 33] I say this because Jesus does not say, whoever hears my words, or whoever hears God's words, which will be more general and to include every single thing that he would ever say at that particular point.

But he doesn't say that. Jesus speaks specifically and pointedly to these words of mine. These words that he just spoken in the Sermon on the Mount.

And in essence, what Jesus is saying to us is that the Sermon on the Mount is the foundation of the Christian life. And everyone who hears and obeys the teachings that embody the Sermon on the Mount is like a wise man who builds his house on the rock.

The Sermon on the Mount, in many ways, to the Christian life, is what basic education is. Learning to read and to write, learning to count, learning to spell, is to general education.

If you don't have that foundation, you don't have a very good chance of building in a serious and predictable and a sustainable way.

[11 : 56] Jesus brings us to these words and he says, whoever hears these words of mine is like the person who is wise, who builds his life on the rock.

Now, this is not to say that it's not important to hear all that Jesus has said or all that is in the word of God. The Bible tells us that we should guard against just merely hearing God's word, that we need to be doers also.

James tells us that in James 1.22 where he says, be hearers, do not be hearers of the word only, but be doers of the word, otherwise you deceive yourselves.

But again, here in this passage, Jesus is not speaking about everything that he would say or everything that's contained in the word of God.

He is specifically speaking about the body of teaching which he had laid down in the Sermon on the Mount and which he had now come to the end of.

[13:10] Let me try to explain it another way because I think this is a very important point for us to grasp. The Sermon on the Mount is the first public teaching of Jesus.

When Jesus was finished that is all that is publicly recorded or recorded of what he said publicly at that particular point. There was nothing else at that point.

There was no gospel of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. There was no book of Acts. The epistles were not written. The New Testament was not written at that particular point.

And so Jesus is referring very specifically and very pointedly to these words that he had just spoken.

Now, I want us to consider a few observations from what Jesus says in these words. Again, notice that Jesus divides his hearers into two groups.

[14:14] groups. And again, all of us is in one of those groups. He likens one group to a wise man. That's the group he refers to in verse 24.

And then he likens another group to a foolish man. He refers to them in verse 26. The first thing that these two groups have in common is both hear the words of Jesus.

Jesus. And at a minimum, hearing means to have come under the teaching of these words of Jesus.

But again, Jesus does not confine what he is saying to his original audience. He extends it. He extends it in this word, everyone.

He doesn't say all of you, but he says everyone who hears these words of mine. There's some of us who are present who have been a part of all the sermons that we have done in this series on the Sermon on the Mount.

[15:31] And some of you may have missed it and some of you are visiting this morning so you probably don't know much of what I'm talking about. But here's what I would say, especially in the context of us in the Bahamas.

Most of us know the Sermon on the Mount. We are in many ways a very peculiar country. There are few countries, as a matter of fact, the only country that I know of that by law religion from a Judeo-Christian perspective must be taught in every government school.

There's the only country that I know of that has that. And so the typical child who comes through our school system studies the Gospels and then studies Romans and parts of 1 Corinthians.

and then we have national exams on them in 9th grade and in 12th grade. And so largely, most, the average Bahamian who has come through, certainly the government school system and a lot of the private schools as well, there's a handful of private schools that don't do the same thing.

And so we have come under the hearing, the awareness of these words of Jesus.

[17:05] And so I think for us, it's going to be a very different kind of situation, I believe, on the last day. Last week, Brother Linden helped us to take very seriously these words of Jesus that not everyone who says, Lord, Lord, didn't I do this and didn't I do that, will enter into the kingdom of heaven.

And you know what? I think, I think, I don't know this without any certainty, but I think that we will have a disproportionately high number of Bahamians in that group.

Just based on the reality of exposure and what we have become responsible for.

And so Jesus expands his original audience by saying, everyone who hears these words of mine, I will liken him to one or the other of these two men.

you know, to take this point even further this morning, I can almost guarantee that if I were to give a test on the Sermon on the Mount, asking what are the Beatitudes and checking other aspects of it, what Jesus taught about lust and what he taught about divorce and what he taught about murder, what he taught about retaliation against our enemies, I believe that many would do well.

[18:54] Many would do well. But that's not the way we're tested on the Sermon on the Mount. We're not tested on the Sermon on the Mount in an academic manner.

Instead, we're tested on the Sermon on the Mount by the extent to which we obey, the extent to which we follow what Jesus taught.

And so, it is more than just hearing Jesus and knowing what he taught.

Instead, our lives are tested. We are tested by our obedience to what Jesus taught. And this is my second and final point.

Obedying Jesus. I pointed out earlier that the first thing that these two groups of people have in common is that both hear the words of Jesus.

[19 : 59] The second thing that they have in common is that each group is likened to a man building a house. And it's clear that Jesus is not talking about a physical house.

He's not talking about building a literal house. Instead, Jesus is talking about building a spiritual house, house of our lives.

And the reality is that we build our lives on what we truly believe. We act upon what we truly believe.

What we believe is true, what we believe is worthwhile, what we believe is valuable, we stake our lives on that. We build our lives on that. We build our lives on what we truly believe, not what we say we believe.

Our lives communicate what we believe, not our lips. Look again at what Jesus says in verse 24.

[21 : 09] Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

This is Jesus is saying that if we are building our lives on the body of teachings in the Sermon on the Mount, we are wisely building on the rock.

We are wisely building on a shore and a solid foundation. foolishly. And notice what he says in contrast in verse 26. 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.

Friends, if our lives are not built on obedience to the words of Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount, we are living foolishly.

we are building foolishly. And so I think we should all take a moment and consider how am I living my life?

[22 : 27] If you're living your life based on the teachings of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, well then you are living wisely. You're building your life wisely. But if you're living your life on your own terms, in your own way, to please yourself away from what Jesus has laid down in the Sermon on the Mount, then you're living foolishly.

You're building your life foolishly. The third thing that Jesus points out about these two groups of people is that both are going to face storms of life.

in verses 25 and 27, Jesus references the same storms that come to each group.

He says, the rain is going to fall, the floods are going to come, and the winds are going to blow on the house of their lives.

The same thing is going to happen to both, Jesus says. But even though both experience the same events, the same storms, Jesus tells us that they have two different outcomes.

[23 : 49] The house of the lives of those who obey Jesus' words, Jesus says, they withstand these storms that come their way.

And those who disobey, Jesus says, the house of their lives come crashing down in the face of those storms.

And the reason is because of the fundamental difference between them. The first group withstand because they have obeyed the words of Jesus. They're the wise.

And then the second group, their house comes crashing down because they disobey the words of Jesus. And they are foolish.

And the difference between them is identified on the ground on which they build the house of their lives. The group that builds on Jesus, they're the ones obeying the words of Jesus.

[24 : 54] They're building on the rock. And those who disobey, they are building on sand. And sand is anything other than these words of Jesus.

Whatever you may be building upon, be it religion, be it materialism, be it whatever you're building upon, away from these words of Jesus, Jesus categorizes all of it as sand.

And so what's the message that Jesus is communicating to us? Jesus is saying to us that if we take the Sermon on the Mount seriously, and we build our lives on it, we are going to be able to weather

the storms of this life.

Brothers and sisters, the relational storms are going to come. We're going to be tempted to be angry. We're going to be tempted to speak angry words to one another.

We're going to be challenged to go the extra mile. We're going to be challenged to turn the other cheek. In this sinful world, we will be tempted to lust.

[26 : 12] We will be tempted to be unfaithful to our spouses and engage in adulterous activity.

We'll be tempted to be flippant with our marriage vows and not be faithful to our spouses, divorcing them for unbiblical reasons.

We'll be challenged to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. We'll be tempted to worry. And we'll be tempted to do all manner of things that Jesus addresses in the Sermon on the Mount.

One of the amazing realities that I've seen in the Sermon on the Mount is this.

There's not one single aspect of life that I can think about that doesn't bring us back to this body of teaching that Jesus gives.

And I want you to meditate on that considerate think about it and try to see if you can find one aspect of life that in some way, shape, or form is not going to bring us right back to the foundation of the Sermon on the Mount.

[27 : 32] This body of teaching that Jesus has given to us. And that is why Jesus is able to say, whoever hears these words of mine, who takes them seriously, who so believes in that he builds his life upon them, obeying them.

I'll tell you what he's like. He is like this one who's going to have stability in life. He is one who when the storms of this life come against him, he's going to be able to stand.

And so I'm going to ask you this morning, in a very personal way, how seriously are you taking these words of Jesus and seeking to build your life upon them by being obedient to them?

Or are you deceived in believing that hearing is enough? That being able to answer all the questions about what Jesus taught correctly is enough?

and I wonder, is there any area of your life that you are aware of, that you are consciously disobeying the Lord in areas that he has addressed in the Sermon on the Mount?

[29 : 03] And friend, if that is you this morning and there is conscious awareness of disobedience to the words of Jesus that he has laid down, that he uses to determine who is wise and who is foolish, if that is you this morning, friend, you're deceived.

You're deceived. And part of the deception for us, brothers and sisters, is that the storms don't come immediately, to show us how faulty the foundation of our life is, what we have built it upon. Sometimes the storms take a long while before they come. Sometimes people can live in disobedience for a long time before the storms come and reveal the true foundations upon which their life is built.

need to repent. And I think part of it is because the Lord is merciful. The Lord is long-suffering and some take long-suffering, some take the Lord's patience, a slackness.

The Lord's long-suffering is intended to bring us to repentance, not to indulge us in disobedience. And I pray this morning that none of us are deceived.

[30 : 29] I pray that none of us are deceived because eternity hangs in the balance. We've considered these three warnings of Jesus as separate sermons, but they're really connected.

If you follow through the warnings that Jesus gives, starting with false prophets, false and then moving on to false assurance, and now to false foundations where there's catastrophic loss, it's very, very clear that some who are confident, confident in where they stand, confident in knowing the Lord, but living lives of disobedience, that was the issue that Jesus raises with those who say, Lord, Lord, and didn't we, and didn't we.

He says, you're workers of lawlessness, you're workers of disobedience, you're disobedient people, you're not obeying what I say. And so, friends, let us not be deceived about this, because otherwise there will be a rude awakening on the day of judgment, where Jesus is saying to us that how we live and how we relate to these words they really matter.

They matter not just now, they matter in eternity. I think it's important for us also this morning though to see what Jesus is not saying.

Jesus is not saying and promising us that if we build our lives on this body of teaching that he has given to us, that it will exempt us from the storms, that our lives will be a bed of roses and we would

not have troubles and trials, and there are some who teach the exact same thing, that if you follow Jesus, if you know Jesus, then all is going to go well for you.

[32 : 36] That's false teaching, brothers and sisters. The storms of life come to all who are in this life, and those who follow Christ are not exempt.

We experience the same storms. But the promise is this, that though those storms will come against us, our lives by the grace of God are going to stand.

It's not going to be catastrophic for us because we have built on the Lord Jesus Christ in his words, and we will be able to weather those storms by the grace of God.

Jesus promises us, he says, in this life, those of you who belong to me, you will have tribulation, but be a good share because I have overcome the world.

So he's not promising us that the storms of life will not come to us. They will come to us. We will be diagnosed with cancer. relationships will fail.

[33 : 49] Financial reversals will come. We will experience the hardness and the harshness of life in a fallen world.

We're not exempt. But our lives are built on something enduring. our lives are built on the words of the one who cannot lie.

And therefore, we will have a different outcome from those who build their lives on something else. Brothers and sisters, I don't think that we need to know a whole lot about construction to know that a house that is built on the foundation of rock takes far more effort and time to build than one that's built on sand.

And the reason is that generally speaking, if you're going to build a house on rock, you have to dig to get to the bedrock. It takes time and effort to get there because you're not just building on the surface of the ground.

You're just building on the sand. And I think this analogy helps us to see that it takes time and effort to hear and apply the words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount to our lives.

[35 : 16] We need to contemplate them, we need to meditate upon them, and then we need to apply them, and we must do this in an ongoing way. And so brothers and sisters, let us take the time to hear and to contemplate and to meditate upon and to apply the Sermon on the Mount to our lives.

Again, I realize that some may be thinking, boy, this is too narrow, you're focusing too narrowly on us building our lives on the Sermon on the Mount rather than all of God's words.

But that shouldn't be a concern. And here's why that shouldn't be a concern. Anyone who truly hears and obeys these words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, if you truly hear and obey these words of Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount, you will obey the rest of what Jesus has to say.

And the reason is that only those who are genuine disciples of Christ can live out the Sermon on the Mount.

And so it follows that they will obey the rest of God's word, not perfectly, but consistently and faithfully.

[36 : 48] Some of you might remember when we started this series in the Sermon on the Mount, I made the point of how a lot of people moralize the Sermon on the Mount and universalize the Sermon on the Mount and they call everyone to live out the ideals of the Sermon on the Mount.

And the belief behind that is that everyone can. As I said to you then, I say to you this morning, not everyone can live out the Sermon on the Mount.

To be able to live out the Sermon on the Mount, one has to have an encounter with the living Christ. One has to experience what the Bible calls being born again from above.

It is only those who have experienced the new birth who have their passions and their affections reordered and redirected to the Lord and to the things of God.

And so that is the precondition, that is the only way, first, we even desire to do these things. And that is the only way that we are able to do these things, by an encounter with the living Christ through the new birth.

[38 : 24] We must also remember that the Sermon on the Mount is only a part of Matthew's gospel. And Matthew is telling a gospel in a very intentional manner.

He's telling a story that doesn't end on the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew's telling a story that ends on another mount. It's a mount called Calvary.

Matthew's telling a story about the one who ascended Calvary's hill and died on a cruel cross to enable sinners like you and me to be able to live out the Sermon on the Mount.

The truth is when we come to the Sermon on the Mount and we're honest with it, we acknowledge we cannot do it. We cannot do it in our own ability, in our own strength.

Indeed, we don't desire to do it. There's nothing in us that naturally desires to forgive our enemies. There's nothing in us that naturally desires to go the extra mile and turn the other cheek.

[39 : 47] It is only when we have had an encounter with the living God. He has given us a new heart that we have such desires.

And Jesus has enabled us, those of us who have come to Christ, to build our lives on the rock of the sure foundation of the Sermon on the mount.

But we're doing more than that. In the first scripture that was read this morning from Isaiah 28, the Lord himself says, I lay in Zion a stone, a corner stone, a tested stone.

And those who believe in him, they will not make haste. They will not be hasty and waste away in destruction. And so we're not just building on these words, we're building on the Lord of these words.

Because if we're taking these words seriously, we're taking Jesus seriously. And ultimately we are building on him, the one who is the cornerstone, the sure foundation upon whom we can build.

[41 : 11] and Jesus is the one who endured the greatest storm that can ever be endured when he hung on Calvary's cross, when the wrath of God was poured out upon him for sinners like you and me.

So that we would never know that storm. But whatever storm we experience in this life, we would never know that ultimate storm. the storm they're experiencing separation from God and the wrath of God was poured out on the Lord Jesus Christ.

And Jesus endured that storm, he endured God's wrath so that none who put their trust in him will ever have to face that storm.

And that's good news. That's good news for all of us. Because you know what? Even those of us who are sincerely as best we can, seeking to obey the Lord Jesus Christ, you know what?

We come up short. We don't do it perfectly. If our making it to heaven was dependent upon perfect obedience to the Sermon on the Mount, none of us would make it.

[42 : 37] it matters not how high a grade we get. We all know it's not going to be 100% because none of us is perfect. to be 100% and Jesus, Jesus not only was a substitute for sinners on the cross to pay the penalty for the sin of sinners, Jesus also lived a perfect life and Jesus obeyed the Father perfectly in all things.

Every aspect of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus perfectly fulfilled it. And God in his mercy credits not just the death of Christ to those who trust in him, but also the life of Christ, the perfect life of Christ, so that even as we faithfully and sincerely live out the Sermon on the Mount, when we fall short, we're not trusting in our works, we're trusting in Jesus, the one who perfectly fulfilled the Sermon on the Mount.

we trust in him, he's our only hope. And I say this to us this morning because there would be a mistake for any of us to walk out of this place and believe that our task now is to obey the Sermon on the Mount and be unmindful of the Lord Jesus Christ, who's already obeyed the Sermon on the Mount fully, perfectly, for all time and for all those who put their trust in him.

Must we be sincere? Yes. Must we seek to obey all that Jesus has taught? Yes.

That's not what we rest in, that's not what we trust in. we trust in the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the one who is perfectly obeyed and the one whose righteousness God credits to the account of those who have come to put their trust in him.

[44 : 54] to those of you this morning who do not know Jesus Christ as Lord and personal Savior, like the rest of us, you're going to face the storms of life.

You're going to face the storms in this life, and then without trust in Jesus, you will face the ultimate storm at the end of life, which is the wrath of God.

The Bible says that the wrath of God will be poured out upon the ungodly. And if you don't know Christ, although I don't know much about your life, here's what I do know.

Whatever life you have is being built on sand. It's being built on something that will not last. It is being built on something that you cannot trust. It is being built on something that is false.

Something that will disappoint. And that is the lot of all who don't know Jesus Christ. The lot of all who don't know Jesus Christ, that is the road that they're on. They're on that broad road that's leading to destruction.

[46 : 13] But the good news this morning is that Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners. The good news this morning is that all those who come to him, he has promised, I will never turn you away.

And God in his mercy has brought you here today to hear that good news. To turn from sin and trust in Christ.

To turn from a life being built on sinking sand, sand that many of you have already experienced, it just disappoints. And he says you can build your life on someone who is sure, a rock, a sure foundation.

and I pray that you will hear the Lord's voice in the offer of the gospel this morning and that you would come to Jesus.

And what you will find is you will find a Savior who is merciful and who is quick to pardon all of your sins, whatever they might be.

[47 : 36] His grace is far greater than your worst sin. And if you come to him this morning, you will find a Savior who will receive you.

I pray that you will do that today. And if you have questions about this sermon, if you want to talk about any aspect of this sermon, I'm happy to talk with you about it.

Let's pray. Well, Father, we are so grateful this morning that we have the words of life. We thank you this morning that the Lord Jesus Christ has given us this body of teaching, but more than that, the Lord Jesus Christ has given us himself.

that we can build our lives, we can stake our lives upon him and his finished work on the cross.

Lord, I pray that those of us who have trusted in Jesus will rejoice in knowing the Savior and that we can trust in and rest in the fact that he has fulfilled the Sermon on the Mount, perfectly and has been credited to us.

I pray this morning, Lord, for those who don't know Christ. Oh, Lord, would you have mercy and open hearts and minds to believe the gospel this morning.

[49 : 20] Would you save, Lord? Would you open blind eyes? Would you raise the dead? Would you do this in Jesus' name? Amen.

Amen.