

Two Builders, One Salvation

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[0 : 00] God and his blessing to that reading from his holy word, as you see there on the screen, the title of the sermon, Two Builders, but One Salvation.

The points that we're going to follow this evening from particularly Luke 6, Profession Without Practice, and then True Religion in Practice.

And as we look at True Religion in Practice at the same time, we're going to look at False Religion in Practice. Two Builders, One Salvation.

You know, Jesus asked many questions, or certainly many questions that are recorded in Scripture. He asked many questions in his time of public ministry. And every question that Jesus asked was for a particular purpose, a particular reason.

And questions were asked by Jesus to make people think, to make people think deeply about, well, about their life. And about their relationship with God.

[1 : 07] And Jesus asked these certain questions, these searching questions. He asked these questions to draw out from those whom he was addressing, to draw out from them, their heart confession of sin, their confession of sinful weaknesses.

And he asked questions to draw people back to him in faith, and to bring to them, to deepen their faith and their trust and obedience to him.

Even to seek forgiveness in him. And of course, these questions that Jesus asked then in his public ministry some 2,000 years ago, are still questions that are asked today.

They're asked to bring you and to bring me to make us think deeply about, well, about our lives. About our relationship with God.

These are searching questions that we find in Scripture that we read of to appropriate ourselves, to make us, well, to make us think about our lives.

[2 : 17] And to draw us to see where truly our relationship with God is. Or indeed, if it isn't, isn't a true and sure relationship with him.

And questions that we find in Scripture to draw from our hearts confession of sin and to draw us back to the Savior in faith and trust and in forgiveness.

And one question that Jesus asked concerning, well, concerning a person's profession without practice, is the question we find here.

This question in relation to the aspect of so many people professing to follow Jesus and yet in practice denying Christ's lordship in their lives.

And that question that we read there, the question that was first asked to the group of people whom Jesus was addressing there on that level part of the mountain where he was teaching.

[3 : 21] Well, it's a question, as I said, that's still asked today. Jesus still asking, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and not do what I tell you?

I remember exactly the context of Jesus asking this question. He's asking this question immediately after he's given this illustration of the good tree and the bad tree and the different fruit that these different kinds of tree produce.

And that illustration pointing to the, well, pointing to the spiritual reality of two kinds of people. Here again, the words from that illustration. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good.

And the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil. For out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaks. And the verdict that Jesus is giving here is the verdict concerning the heart of man. That heart, that the heart that, well, indicates what a person truly is. Whether indeed that person has a sure and true and saving relationship with the Lord.

[4 : 34] Or whether indeed a person in heart is a hypocrite. Remember what Jesus said elsewhere as we read in Matthew 15. Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

So Jesus is focusing on the heart. And so immediately from Jesus' teaching about the heart of man as illustrated in the example of the two trees.

Then, you know, he's drawing us again to see the heart of man. The heart where O'Kershon truly is in relation to God. Whether it be the good, sincere heart.

Or the bad, hypocritical heart. So Jesus is asking, well, asking this question. A question, well, you might say goes to the very heart of the matter. Where is your heart in relation to the Lord Jesus? Where are you truly in relation to him? You see what Jesus is doing here. He's probing the heart. He's probing the hearts of all who listen to him.

[5 : 45] All who are hearing him. He's doing this to tease out from those who are hearing him. Whether then, 2,000 years ago or today. He's teasing out from us where we truly are before him.

Where we are in heart. And the clear point that Jesus is making here is not enough to speak the right words. And acknowledge that Jesus is Lord by our mouths.

There's got to be evidence to show that you, that I, that we are people. People who call Jesus Lord. And show that. Show that truly Jesus is our Lord.

And show it by our works. And by our obedience to God. And yes, with words. Yes, but words that are backed up with the evidence of our saving faith.

A saving relationship with the one true Lord. And that evidence. That evidence. This has to be in your heart, but made evident by your actions.

[6 : 50] Actions that demonstrate your obedience to God. And that your words tally with a heart that truly does exhibit a saving relationship with God.

Through the evidence of who you are and what you do. As you show your love to God and your neighbor. I'll come back to that point later. You see, Jesus is saying here.

You know, it's so easy to claim to be a disciple of Jesus. It's so easy to say, I'm a Christian. But the evidence has to be there to prove it.

And so Jesus is saying here. You see, my disciples. You don't merely say that you are my disciple. You've got to show that you're a disciple of Jesus.

By what you do. Now, this phenomenon. This wrong, if you like. This wrong profession. This profession without practice.

[7 : 51] That wasn't a new phenomenon when Jesus uttered these words. It wasn't something new that suddenly emerged when Jesus came to earth. You see it even in the Old Testament.

For example, you read in the book of Ezekiel. The prophecy of Ezekiel. Ezekiel is with the exiles. Has been exiled from their homeland.

And even in the book of Ezekiel, the prophet there. He shows the kind of hypocrisy that was around. Even in his time. You go to Ezekiel chapter 33.

Verse 30 to 31. And you read there of the people there in exile in Babylon. And they're saying one to another. Come and hear what the word is that comes from the Lord. So, they're speaking.

They're saying, come and let's hear what the Lord has said to us. But then God the Lord. God who sees into their hearts. And he gives his response through his prophet Ezekiel.

[8 : 53] Listen to the response. And they come to you as people come. And they sit before you as my people. And they hear what you say.

But they will not do it. For with lustful talk in their mouths they act. Their heart is set on their gain. These words. They hear what you say.

But they will not do it. And the people there in Ezekiel's time. They'd mentioned the name of the Lord. They'd pretended to seek the Lord's word and the Lord's will.

All along in their heart. It was just a pretense. It was what we might say. It was a show of religion. But a true religion. A true religion. Without true allegiance and true obedience.

To the one true God. And the evidence of that. The hypocrisy. Heard in the solemn verdict that God gave. They hear what you say.

[9 : 53] But they will not do it. They heard the word. They heard Ezekiel give the word. But they wouldn't obey that word. Or we turn to the New Testament.

Again hearing this warning against pretended religion. This time from the mouth of the Apostle James. And it's the warning that James gives in his letter.

James 1.22. That be doers of the word. And not hearers only. Deceiving yourself. In other words. The fact of reality.

Of profession without practice. Well. What Jesus is warning against. It's age old. Somebody's written about this aspect of hypocrisy.

Even in the church. He's written. This person's written. It's a soul ruining plague. That has slain. It's tens of thousands. A very apt.

[10:50] I suppose apt statement. Even in the current plague. The reality of the virus. The virus that we're going through. That certainly has physically slain. It's tens of thousands. But how much more grave.

Is the sin of hypocrisy. Even within the church. When many even within the wider church. Call Jesus Lord. Lord. But don't do what he tells you.

But before we move on to the illustration. About the two builders. I really do have to echo. Echo again the words that Jesus is giving to each one of us.

I echo these words. Speaking to yourself as much. As I speak to myself. Why do you call Jesus Lord, Lord. And do not do what he tells you.

You know we can make the most plausible profession of faith. And we can appear for all the world to see. That we're men or women of faith in Jesus.

[11:50] Where's the evidence? Where's the evidence of that faith? Where are the works that prove your faith? Where are the works that prove my faith? And again we have to go back to the Apostle James here.

James 2.26. As the body apart from the spirit is dead. So also faith apart from works is dead. Jesus didn't ask questions for the sake of it.

Jesus asked in order to draw you deep, deep into your heart. And for you to examine yourself on the basis of his question given to you.

And we pray then by the leading of God's Holy Spirit. That you will examine your heart. That you'll test your heart. You'll try yourself.

And you'll see if there's anything offensive in you. And come before God with confession of sin. And that he will lead you in his way everlasting. Because what's so offensive before a holy God?

[12:55] Well, as we've seen here, is the sin of hypocrisy. It's that professing to follow Jesus. But denying that profession by not doing what Jesus commands you to do.

But then, of course, we have to ask the question. What about this doing what Jesus commands you to do? And isn't this really the crux of the matter here?

Where is the evidence of the true believer? As opposed to the false believer? Well, we see that in the illustration that Jesus gives us here of the true builders.

And as we noticed in our sermon subheadings. True religion and practice. As opposed to false religion and practice. Here again the words of Jesus.

True religion and practice. Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them. I will show you what he is like. He's like a man building a house.

[13:56] Who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house. And could not shake it. Because it had been well built.

Then Jesus immediately turns. To what is false religion and practice. But the one who hears and does not do them. Is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation.

When the stream broke against it. Immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great. I've read these words again because it's so important to drink in what Jesus is telling us here.

What did you notice? I pray that you'd notice that both house builders. They heard the word of Jesus. They heard what Jesus said.

But only one put Jesus' words into practice. And we can apply this in saying that certainly both men had an encounter with Jesus.

[15:02] But only one of these men acted on that encounter by doing what Jesus commanded them to do in obeying his word. And, you know, you see that illustration so clearly in this illustration of the house building.

The first man there, he dug deep into the rock. He dug so far down. And so much so that when the house was built on that rock, then you couldn't see the foundation.

The foundation was dug so deep. Hidden. A hidden foundation. It's what kept that house from being destroyed. When the river around the house burst its banks and the flood came around the house.

But the house was unmoved. It was unshaken. The house could still be lived in and lived in securely. But then look at the second man.

The same house is built. The same, certainly, above-ground structure is there. But in the second builder, that builder builds his house without any foundation.

[16:05] Stans would have looked just like the first house. And it would appear anyway that there was no danger to that house. But as soon as the same river, as soon as that river burst its banks, the house was swept away.

Because there was no foundation to support that house. And the evidence, the evidence then about a wasted life. A wasted life building a house with no foundation to support that house.

And if we're going to probe that illustration a little more, then you see the difference between these two men and their two houses. And where's the difference?

The difference lies in what's unseen. Well, the two houses, as I said, they would have appeared the same. They would have looked the same. But there was one crucial difference between these two houses.

The difference, if you like, that makes all the difference. The difference in what kept these houses steady and upright.

[17:11] And think of it in relation to faith. True faith. The one who truly does know the Lord God as God, as Savior.

The one who truly does as Jesus asks him to do. He builds his life. She builds her life on what's unseen. Building your life on the unseen God.

And doing it empowered by the Holy Spirit. If you follow the one whom you don't see, don't physically see. And yet, know and believe with all your heart.

But the false believer. The one who pretends a faith but has no faith within. On the surface might appear the same person as the initial person.

Might appear to be a person of faith. But he's not built his life on the rock of Christ. He doesn't have the Holy Spirit within his heart. And he doesn't have God the Father as his heavenly Father.

[18:13] And we can bring this to a contemporary context. Because the true believer and the true, well, the true believer and the false believer. Well, they may even worship in the same building.

They may even profess the same faith. But in a time of testing and affliction. That's when the heart will truly be revealed.

That's why we read in Matthew 25 the parable of the sower. Remember when Jesus really was speaking of those who hadn't dug deep in faith in him. Those who heard, as Jesus gave in the illustration of the parable, the seed that was sown on rocky ground.

Those who heard the word and received it initially with joy. But as Jesus said, The ones on the rocky ground are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy.

These have no root. They believe for a while. And in time of testing, they fall away. And exactly the same scenario as the illustration Jesus gives of the two house builders.

[19:22] The person who built this house on no foundation would find his house collapse. And the inference surely there then is in a time of testing and trial where there's no foundation to anchor your soul.

Well, you may well anchor your soul in other things. The false foundations of power or status or riches or possessions.

They can't sustain anyone. They can't sustain the person who's made a false profession of faith. Well, trusted not in Jesus, but trusted in himself and all that self has accumulated in life.

But the true believer, the one who shows true religion and practice, well, yes, he'll face buffeting. He'll face attacks and trials and sufferings and hardships.

But he won't waver because his life is rooted in the one who, well, who took for him, for her, the ultimate buffeting and attack and trial and suffering and hardship.

[20:36] When he suffered there in life and he suffered there on the cross. So that when the true believer shares in the sufferings of Christ, the true believer has Christ beside him, Christ with him, Christ beneath him.

And Christ is his rock, is her rock. The one whom he's built, she's built her life on. And yes, the one who builds his house on the rock, yes, he'll know that there are pains and trials and sufferings for a season.

But these are light and momentary afflictions. They don't endure. But they are, as we read elsewhere in Scripture, they are preparing for you, your eternal blessing in heaven. That blessing that awaits all who built their house and built their life in the Lord Jesus Christ. And who in life have done as Jesus has commanded them to do. But of course, this really begs the question, something I alluded to earlier, we'll come back to now. What does Jesus ask you to do? Well, quite simply this, to love God and your neighbour as yourself.

[21 : 51] You see, that love is going to be demonstrated in your heart worship of God. It's going to be demonstrated in your love of God and you're holding firmly to the truth of God's word.

You're holding firmly in your heart and defending that truth wholeheartedly in action. You're going to show your faithful obedience to the word of Jesus, Jesus' commands.

You're going to show that faithfulness and a spirit-filled life of love for others. You're going to go that second mile for others.

You're going to do what Jesus said. The clear is going to be said on that day of judgment about the true saints of God. Jesus said, who truly did call in Jesus, Lord, Lord, and showed that lordship of Jesus in their lives.

You showed it by their actions and, yes, in feeding the hungry as if the hungry were Christ. In welcoming the stranger as if the stranger were Christ.

[23 : 26] In clothing the naked as if the naked were Christ. In visiting the sick as if the sick were Christ. In visiting those in prison as if the prisoner were Christ.

What about you? I mean, are you a true believer? A genuine believer? Or just making a false profession? Yes, as we've said, the two might seem at first the same on so many levels.

But of course, the question is this. On what and on whom are you building your life? Where is your heart?

Where does your heart truly lie? Is it lying with Jesus? Are you like the first house builder that Jesus illustrated there as he closed the ceremony on the plain?

Are you asked that first house builder who truly does and has built your house and built your life on the rock that's the Lord Jesus?

[24 : 28] Or are you asked that second house builder, the one who didn't build his house on a sure foundation? Are you asked him not building your life on the sure rock that's Jesus?

See, this has eternal implications. You see, the consequence of not doing as Jesus has called you to do. Well, as Jesus says there in that illustration, for those who do not build their life on him, will be a great ruin.

I'm sure most of you have watched a film of the tsunami that hit Japan in 2011. And if you remember what you've seen there, that the sheer force of water that swept away houses and buildings, it was utterly incredible.

You see, the ruin of towns and villages in such a short space of time. Nothing, nothing was spared. What had seemed so secure was so vulnerable in the face of that great force of nature.

It was a ruin, utter ruin. But how much more? How much more the ruin of a person? Who in life scoffed at Jesus and scoffed at following Jesus?

[25 : 46] Well, he may well have liked church. He may well have even liked the nice stories about Jesus. But he wouldn't build his life in Jesus.

And for that disobedience, he'll know ruin. Ruin in the place of eternal destruction, as God's word tells us, that place reserved for the devil and his angels.

So where will you spend eternity? Will you spend eternity with Christ, the rock? With Christ, the chief cornerstone?

Will you spend your life on him in whom there is eternal security? Or have you built your life simply on sand, nothingness?

Will you spend eternity then with the evil one and all who would not turn their heart to the saviour and give their lives to him? Will you not give your life to Jesus and build your life on the rock that is here?

[26 : 53] Amen.