

The Life That Stands Through a Storm

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 09 December 2018

Preacher: Pastor Bart Leger

[0 : 00] Good morning again. We are still in the book of Matthew and chapter number 7. Considered the sermon, Jesus' sermon or his message from while he was on the mountain.

And we are going to be in verses 24 through 27 this morning. So if you want, you may begin by turning your Bibles there as we prepare to get into God's Word.

Jesus was a very, very good storyteller. As a matter of fact, that is pretty much the way he communicated.

He communicated by illustrating. He communicated by telling stories. His method of communication was not just simply what we would call didactic.

It wasn't just teaching. It was teaching by story, teaching by illustrating, teaching by metaphor. And this is one of the ways Jesus is teaching in his message on the mountain.

[1 : 05] And that is what we see today. Jesus is taking a storm. He's taking two different people. And he is contrasting the way they built their house.

But we know that it is speaking about people's lives and what they're basing their lives upon. The different foundations that we may use in our lives.

And he describes the fate of those who are religious but lost. And so what he does now is tells a story of two men to illustrate false faith and true faith.

And these two builders represent all people. Everyone who has ever lived and who will ever live is represented in this illustration that Jesus gives here.

The wise man to which Jesus refers is those who hear the Word of God and those who obey it. And the foolish man represents those who hear the Word of God and ignore it.

[2 : 16] Let's jump right into our text this morning. Matthew chapter 7 beginning with verse number 24 where he says, So he says, He says, And he goes on in verse 26, But then he contrasts.

Everyone who hears these sayings of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

And same situation. Potentially the same storm. The rain descended. The floods came. And the winds blew and beat on that house. Same external circumstances.

And it fell. And he says, Great was its fall. Today we're going to be talking about a life that stands through a storm.

Because we are continuing what Jesus was talking about. Continuing with verses 21 through 23 where Jesus was talking about those who thought they were going to be in heaven with God.

[4 : 05] But will have a sad or rude awakening. And there's going to be a sad result. He's continuing on with that same line of teaching.

There are those who hear and trust and follow and obey. And there are those who hear the word of God. But yet choose to ignore it. Choose not to trust Christ as their Savior.

Choose not to follow Jesus and build their life upon the word of God. And so what we see in this, the moral, if you will, of this illustration that Jesus gives.

First of all, the wise man built his house on the rock. We see that in verse 24. Therefore, whoever hears these sayings of mine and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock.

So what the rock does, it provides a solid foundation. It's like any time we build, whether it be a house, whether it be a building, the best foundation is a rock.

[5 : 10] And, of course, the nearest thing we have down here is concrete. And so what we do is we take the foundation, we go down to firm soil, and then we pour concrete and build that as a foundation.

And then that is upon which the house is erected. And so the foundation gives it stability. The foundation allows the building to weather the storms without collapsing, without falling. So the rock provides a solid foundation for us. Who is our rock? Well, Psalm 28, verse 1, tells us, To you I will cry, O Lord, my rock.

Do not be silent to me, lest if you are silent to me I become like those who go down to the pits. So for the psalmist, who was the one that provided the protection?

Who was the one that provided the refuge? Who was the one that provided the stability and the safety in the storms of his life? God the Father. And for us, we know that Jesus is God.

[6 : 19] Jesus is our Savior. And he died on the cross in our place. And so he is our only sure rock.

Psalm 62, verse 2, Psalm 62, 2. He only is my rock. That, in contrast to what current ideology would be or current teaching would be, and that is we look for different things for our safety.

We look for different things for our stability. Some people feel that if they were in a good relationship, that's the only way they can be stable or have stability. Some people feel that if they have a large enough IRA or 401K or retirement plan, that that's their security.

There are some who feel that if they've got to have a government job in order for you to have security, well, we know that sometimes that doesn't always provide a security either. And so the Bible tells us that Jesus is our only rock.

Because we know through teachings of the Old Testament as well as the New Testament that there's no such thing as a sure thing. Whether it's job, money, family, no matter what, they're not a sure thing.

[7 : 42] Because we know that life on earth is short. We may lose our family to death. We may lose our job to a recession or to whatever else. We may lose our money to corruption in government or corruption at the bank.

And so we know that there's only security and safety in Jesus Christ. The Bible goes on to say in verse 2, He is my defense. I shall not be greatly moved.

I shall not be moved because we're on the rock. We're on the only sure rock of our foundation. We see Psalm 62, 6 and 7.

He only is my rock and my salvation. We hear that again. He is my defense. I shall not be moved. We see that reiterated. Verse 7. In God is my salvation and my glory.

Now the salvation to which it refers here in the Old Testament is deliverance. Deliverance from enemies. Deliverance from death or deliverance from difficulties. God is my salvation and my glory.

[8 : 47] The rock of my strength and my refuge, the psalmist says, is in God. And we need to have our foundation, our security and safety only be found that we would only find in God.

That's how we build our life. The sad fact is there are those who are self-proclaimed Christians whose life is not very different from those who don't know Christ.

And when we look at the research from Barna and from others who do research about the church and those who are claiming to be Christians, now this is an alarming statistic.

I don't know what it is today, but I know what it was just a few years ago. The average divorce rate was hovering around 50%.

That was across the board. Do you know what the research says that Barna researched? I think it was Barna. Those who are self-proclaimed, those who self-proclaimed, those who say I identify as a Christian.

[10 : 05] Do you know what the divorce rate among Christians? And I use air quotes was. I don't know the exact. I don't remember the exact, but I think it was.

I think it was either 52 or 54%. So those who claim to be Christians, the divorce rate was higher than the general population or an aggregate of all divorces.

Now, what does that tell us? I don't know what it tells us. But what it should tell us is if we claim to be a follower of Jesus Christ, our lives should be different.

Do you know what the divorce rate in the 50s was? 20%. And so what we're seeing is as life goes on, as we think about moral relativism, as we think about, well, if I think this is right or this feels right for me, but if we go to the foundation and the rock, Jesus Christ, and obey his word, our life will be different.

And so he is our rock. And what we see is this first individual, the wise man, built his house on the rock, on the foundation.

[11 : 19] Verse 11 of 1 Corinthians 3. The Bible says, For no other foundation can anyone lay that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Whether it's government, whether it's religion, there is nothing else. No one else can build a foundation that will last other than Jesus Christ.

And so the Bible is very clear on that. For those who say, well, you know what, I don't need Jesus. Well, where do they turn when their life is disrupted?

Where do they go when they need help? Yes, we can go to each other, but there is a limit to what friends and family can provide for us. There is no limit to what God can accomplish and can do for us.

So this foundation is secure. We're told in 2 Timothy 2 and verse 19, Nevertheless, do you see a pattern here?

[12 : 26] Do you see a theme here? All the way from the Old Testament to the New Testament. The same theme of a foundation. God is our foundation. The New Testament refines that and says Jesus is our foundation.

Nevertheless, the solid foundation of God stands having this seal. The Lord knows those who are His. Come back.

We revisit last week's message when we talk about the security of the believer, those who are in the family of God. We are protected and we are saved.

We are redeemed through the blood of Christ. And we are sealed by the Holy Spirit to the day of redemption, the Bible says. And it says, Nevertheless, the solid foundation of God stands.

Again, the same word. Having this seal. The Lord knows who are His. Depart from iniquity.

[13 : 27] Move away from sin. Choose to live a life that is holy. Choose to live a life that is separated unto God, living a holy life. And only when Christ is our foundation and when we are building our life on obedience to the Word of God and upon the foundation of the Word of God can we be truly holy.

So the question is, are you building your life on this foundation? Where is our attention Monday through Saturday? You know, it's one thing for us to get dressed up, take our Bibles, come to church, and look holy, sound holy, smell holy on Sundays.

But what about Monday morning when we get to the grind? What about by Wednesday when we're getting tired or frustrated and looking forward to the week?

What are we basing our foundation on? I just finished reading a book by Chip Ingram that Jeremy had recommended for me.

Awesome book. Excellent book. It's called Culture Shock. And he goes over the issues that are really, really, really difficult and divisive.

[14 : 47] Talks about homosexuality. Talks about sexuality. Sexuality talks about politics. Talks about all these issues.

And he's very, very, very true to the Word of God. Unwavering when it comes to the Word of God and how God stands on all these issues. And one of the things that he was talking about in the area of politics and the church's responsibility and individual believers' responsibility, and he brings out, and I believe wholeheartedly aligned with what Chip Ingram teaches, and that is the church has a different responsibility than the individual believer to a great degree.

The church's responsibility is to teach the Word of God. The church's responsibility is to be where the body of Christ gathers together. But it's the individual believer's responsibility to make disciples and to make a difference in our society by way of being salt and light.

It's the individual believer that God said is the salt and the light. And he refers to a friend of his who is a very strong believer.

He says they were discipled by the same parachurch organization. And any of you all familiar with Walk Through the Bible? Chip Ingram was a teacher with Walk Through the Bible for many years and I believe graduated from Dallas Seminary.

[16 : 19] And this other gentleman that said when he discipled people, he basically has them understand that there's two prerequisites, that they'll be followers of Jesus and they'll obey the Word of God.

And he says, but this gentleman, oh, he's also the CEO of one of the largest of a large company. Well, he is Chinese and he is from China.

And so he is the CEO of one of the largest corporations in China. And he was telling Chip that he recently had a sit-down meeting with the minister of religion.

Well, now we're talking China that is non-godly. Actually, it is China is irreligious. There is basically no religion in China.

So it's almost like an oxymoron to have a minister of religion in China. And there's persecution.

They're literally killing Christians. And he said, oh, really?

[17 : 30] You had a sit-down meeting with him? And the course of the conversation was, he said, when you're having your financial people come in for training in one of our larger cities, he says, you can meet with your groups.

You can pray. You can pray. And you can do whatever you want to do. He said, but just keep the groups below 100 and just don't make a lot of noise. He says, because your people, he says, and I have nothing against your Christianity.

Because your integrity and your ethical values are good for China. So basically, he said, all I don't want, the main thing I don't want is for there to be government disruption.

And so this Chinese government official, who is philosophically anti-Christian, because the government is anti-Christian, knows that because of this gentleman, this friend, who is a follower of Christ, and who is a devout believer and disciples other believers in China and runs his business, runs his corporation on ethical, biblical, moral values and trains his people who works for him to have those same moral, ethical, business values.

The Chinese government realizes that it's good for China. Because of their lifestyle. And all of that to say this.

[19 : 31] When we're building our life on the foundation of Jesus Christ, it doesn't matter what other people believe or think.

They will at least respect you for your ethics, for your morality. Whether they agree with it or not, it may offend them in the way they want to live, but they cannot dispute or refute that your life is a whole lot better when you follow God's plan and God's way of doing things.

So are you building your life on this foundation? And in a country that is persecuting Christians, here is a believer who is living his life based on this firm foundation, and he is getting favor.

He was receiving favor from the government. And so have you trusted Christ as your Savior? And this is, again, a question from from last week. And are you building your life on his word?

So then came a storm and challenged the structure of the house. The house that the wise man built stood firm. But we see next that the foolish man built his house on the sand.

[20 : 54] What was the result of it? Verse 26. But everyone who hears these sayings of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

He heard the word of God, but he ignored it. See, there are many choices for life's foundations. Could be job, could be family, could be children, could be whatever else.

We choose many different things as the foundation of our life. Some choose to build on wealth. Some choose to build on pleasure. Some people choose to build their life on the praises of other people.

They are people pleasers, and they only feel firm and secure when they are receiving the acclamation of others. So the question is, on what are we building our life?

On what are you building your life? And will your life hold up in the storms of life? We may get that bad report from the doctor.

[21 : 59] We may get that pink slip from the job. We may get whatever it is, just fill in the blank. Will our life hold up in the times of storm?

And the storm collapsed the house of the man who built his house on the sand. And so will be the result of those who build their house on the shaky foundation of wealth or family or job or bank account.

Good health, good health, whatever it is. We know what the result of that would be. So what made the difference?

Well, we see. What made the difference is the devastating storms in this parable were the same. The rains descended. The floods came.

The winds blew and beat on those two houses. The difference was in the foundations. The house on the rock stood firm. And the house built on the sand collapsed.

[23 : 10] That was the difference. That was the difference between these two lives. Lives that heard the word of God, obeyed it, and those who heard the word of God and ignored it and went on and based their life on whatever.

So again, the question this morning is, we know that storms come to all. Will your life stand when the storms arrive?

So let's build our lives on the foundation of Jesus Christ and God's word. Let's pray. Father, this morning, we are so thankful for your goodness, your provision, your protection, the refuge that you offer in the times of storm.

Lord, we are so blessed by what you provide for us. May we be able to accomplish your will and obey your word. May your Holy Spirit give us the ability, the power to obey you.

May through your Holy Spirit, Heavenly Father, you, Lord, anoint us with your Holy Spirit's power and your blessing. And may your hand be with us as we serve you and make disciples of those around us.

[24 : 29] Lord, we thank you for your goodness, for your blessings. Father, we pray all of this in Jesus' name. Amen.