

The Way of a Changed Heart

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[0 : 00] If you haven't met me, my name is Aaron Roberts. I also work here at St. John's and we have about 8 to 10 minutes together. So these two short parables that Jesus preached in Luke 6, these come right at the end of an extended sermon.

And I want us to focus on the story of the two builders. So you remember, you've got these two guys, they each build a house. The first builder builds a house with a really solid foundation. He digs deep into the earth.

The second guy doesn't bother with a foundation. A flood comes. The first house remains standing. The house of the second guy is swept away and destroyed.

So the question is, what is that foundation? Within the parable, what does the foundation represent? Because that's what we want. Now you can probably guess it's got something to do with Jesus.

But the foundation is not simply Jesus. And the foundation is not Jesus' words. The parable is more subtle than that.

[1 : 15] I'll read two verses to you again. Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and not do what I tell you? Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I'll show you what he is like.

And then we get the parable. So did you catch it? The foundation is doing. The foundation is actually living out the words of Jesus.

So Jesus was speaking to a large crowd. And among the crowd, there were some genuine disciples, but there were others there. People who were happy to walk and go hear Jesus, happy to think and ponder his words.

So the issue was not, are you listening to Jesus? They were all listening to Jesus. Like we're all listening to his words this morning. The issue is, are you doing what Jesus said?

The foundation that weathers the flood is obedience. Now some of the folks on that day believed they were disciples. We know this from verse 46 because Jesus says, Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and not do what I tell you?

[2 : 27] Lord. That's the language of a disciple, right? That's supposed to be the language of a disciple. And they even say it twice, Lord, Lord. But Jesus says to them, I'm clearly not in charge of your life, despite what you say.

I'm obviously not the Lord of your life, despite what you call me. And I know that because you don't do what I ask. Folks, obedience matters to Jesus.

How we act is not a layer of niceness on the more important task of orthodox thinking. No, obedience is the proof that our discipleship is genuine.

Now friends, I am not trying to beat you up this morning. But these are just very serious words from Christ. I'll remind you again of verse 49.

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.

[3 : 39] And the ruin of that house was great. They're sobering words. The flood in the story here.

It's not just talking about the storms of life that we face. It's not just talking about a relationship crisis. It's not talking about loneliness. It's not talking about a difficult diagnosis or a job loss.

As hard as those things are, Jesus has a far more significant crisis in mind. The storm of our passage is God's final judgment on our life.

It's where it will be made clear if we really were followers of Christ or not. Folks, the point is really simple. It is foolish and dangerous to build a house without a foundation.

It is foolish and dangerous to hear the words of Jesus and not obey them. Now, a lot of Christians think obedience is a bad word.

[4 : 48] Well, not teachers and parents and stuff. We love that word. But the rest of us, I think our Protestant sort of inclination is to push back on the idea of obedience when it comes to faith.

I think we worry that if we persevere on obedience too long, we'll forget about grace. And I understand that. Our obedience does not earn God's love. We are absolutely saved by grace. But obedience does demonstrate that grace has worked its way into our bones. And it's changed the way we live.

And that's what the first parable is about. Verse 43. For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit. For each tree is known by its fruit.

That's what it's saying, right? It's saying that when Jesus comes into your life, the Holy Spirit changes your heart, gives you new ambitions. Gives you a new way of living.

[5 : 49] And the evidence is fruit in your life. The evidence is your actions. And again, I know obedience, it sounds a bit funny to us. But here's the thing. We're always obeying something.

Every day you obey some Lord. You serve something. The question is, is it the Lord Jesus? Today, the great lords of the West Coast, well, there's lots of things.

But it's the freedom to construct a life as you please. It's self-care above all else. It's self-fulfillment. It's personal happiness above everything. And they all sound great.

And it's tempting to obey those lords. But whilst the world around us is trying to self-fabricate the perfect West Coast life, Jesus steps in and he says, I have an outrageous assignment for you. Jesus says, I have something for you to do that's bigger than your life. And self-care is important, but I want you to care more about the things I care about. And he doesn't leave us floating here.

[6 : 53] Remember, this is part of a much larger sermon where he calls us to live as counter-cultural people. And listen to some of the things in chapter 6 that he calls us to live to.

He says, rejoice. That's good. But rejoice when people hate you on account of your faith. He says, do good to those same people. He says, give to everyone who begs.

He says, lend and expect nothing in return. He says, don't judge. He says, be merciful. Does it work?

Does this crazy life way of doing things work? Of course it works. What exploded over the Mediterranean 2,000 years ago was not just great ideas. It wasn't simply orthodox thinking. What exploded and captivated the Roman Empire was a new way of being. Was a new community. And I've been thinking about this week as I think about our cultural moment.

[7 : 57] There's so much anger and so much division. And we're in this toxic soup. But if we lived as genuine followers of Christ.

Folks, we could be a magnetic community. All that to say, Jesus calls us to live an outrageous life. To really live it. Not just ponder it.

Not just think about it. Because it's proof that he lives in you. You see, the alternative to that is just to think about Jesus. And to have this sort of attached intellectual appreciation of Jesus.

A help when we feel sad, perhaps. But mostly, we just kind of do our own thing. We live how we want. And if that is what you've got going right now in your life.

If that's all you know of Jesus. Folks, you have no foundation to your home. And again, I'm not trying to beat you up.

[9 : 01] But you are in spiritual danger. The passage before us is a great promise. That when we face God. With a foundation of living out our faith.

A real faith. God will see us through to eternity. But it is also a warning. Do we have a foundation? I read an article this week.

Critiquing North American models of pastoral care. Which is the kind of thing you pay me to do, I guess. It was actually really interesting.

Despite what it sounds like. So it was an interview of a couple of heavyweights. A guy called Stanley Harawas. A guy called Will Willimon. A couple of theologians. And the gist of it was. It was basically saying.

That. Some of our models. Of North American pastoral care. Have been corrupted. By the culture we live in.

[10 : 09] And saying that. Some of the ways we do pastoral care. Is just making self-absorbed people. More self-absorbed. And it was a very provocative read.

And I'll read a couple of quotes to you from it. I think they're helpful to us. People are encouraged to believe. That the purpose of being born. Is to be free. To self-construct your life.

As you please. Eventually the burden becomes unbearable. They find it impossible to choose their way. Into a life worth living. I sometimes think. The contemporary North American Christians. Are so beset by personal psychological problems. Because. And this is a great line. Because the church. Has failed to give us. Any assignment. More interesting. Than the care. Of our own souls. So. For the record. Jesus is calling us. To live. A life. [11 : 05] Of costly. Beauty. An outrageous life. Not a life. Of just generic goodness. A life. Rooted. In the words. Of Christ. This is. Not. Crazy stuff. I'm saying this morning. This is just. Basic Christianity. And it's. Baked. Into. Our own church's. Vision. To be a community. Of contrast. A community. Of real difference. That's what we're aiming for. That's my hope. For all of us. It's what we want for you. As a staff. Because. It's proof. That your house. Has. A strong foundation. Amen. A strong foundation. This is. [12 : 06] Here are your own people. Thanks. We want our.'