The Way of a Changed Heart (PM)

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Preacher: Rev. Aaron Roberts

[0:00] So, we have 10 minutes, 8 to 10 minutes together, 8 to 10 minutes together to look at this parable. And do you know what's super fun about this? Is that I officiated the wedding of Ada and Andrew how many years ago?

7 years ago. And at that wedding I preached the passage, right? I preached the parable of the two houses.
So, it's just so wonderful to be able to preach it again for Everett's baptism. So, you know the story. These two guys, they build a house each. They both look the same. The first builder puts in a really solid foundation.
He digs deep. Second guy doesn't bother with a foundation. A flood comes. The house with a foundation remains. The house that is just sat on the ground is swept away and destroyed.
So, the big question for us, the big question for us is what is the foundation? Like, within the parable, what does it represent?
[1:01] Because that's what we want, obviously. You can probably guess it's something to do with Jesus. But it's not just Jesus. And it's not just simply Jesus' words either.

The parable is a bit more subtle than we initially think. Listen to verses 46 and 47. 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 will show you what he is like.
And then we get the parable. So, did you catch it? The foundation is the doing. The foundation is doing the words of Jesus.
So, Jesus was speaking to a large crowd. This was the end of a fairly lengthy sermon he preached in Luke 6. And amongst the crowd, there were some genuine disciples. But there were others there who were just happy to sort of listen and think and ponder his words.
So, the issue is not, are you listening to Jesus? They were all listening to Jesus. Like, we are all listening to Jesus right now.
[2:12] The issue is, are we doing what Jesus said? The foundation he's talking about here, the foundation that weathers the flood is obedience.

Now, some of the listeners that day believed they were disciples. We know this from verse 46. Jesus says, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and not do what I tell you?
Lord, that's the language of a disciple. That's the kind of thing a disciple would say. If you say it twice, they're probably kind of convinced that they're a disciple.
But Jesus here says, I am clearly, I'm clearly not in charge of your life. I'm obviously not the Lord of your life, despite what you call me. And I know that because you don't, you don't do what I ask you to do.
Obedience matters to Jesus. How we act is not just like a layer of niceness on the more important task of orthodox thinking.
[3:20] No, it's obedience is the proof that our discipleship is genuine. Now, friends, I am not trying to beat you up this morning.

These are just very serious words from Christ. Listen again to verse 49. 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 streams broke against it, immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.
Sobering words. The flood in the story is not simply talking about the storms of life we all face.
You know, like relationship crisis or loneliness. It's not just talking about, you know, like a really difficult diagnosis, as hard as that is, or a job loss.
Those are very hard things. But that's not the storm in our passage. Jesus has a far more significant crisis in mind. The storm in our passage is when we face God at the end of time.

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[4:33] Where it will be made clear if we really were followers of Christ or not. That's what he's talking about. Folks, it is foolish and dangerous, as you know, to build a house with no foundation.

It is foolish and dangerous to hear the words of Jesus and not obey them. Now, I know a lot of Christians think obedience is a bad word.
Well, maybe not the teachers and the parents. We love the word obedience. But the rest of us, I think our Protestant inclination is to push back on that word. We worry that if we perseverate too long, we'll forget about grace, right?
And I understand that. Our obedience, we do 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. That's what the first parable is about. 43. What's it saying?
[5:44] It's saying that when Jesus comes into your life, Holy Spirit gets in there and changes our hearts. And the evidence is good fruit growing in your life.

The evidence is your actions. And I know, I know, obedience. It still sits a bit funny. But here's the thing. Listen, we are always obeying something.
You're always obeying some God. You're always obeying some Lord. The question is, is it the Lord Jesus? Today, the great lords of the West Coast, well, there are a number of things.
It's, you know, 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 just live your life laser focused on those things. But while people around us, while the world around us is attempting to self-fabricate like the perfect West Coast life, Jesus steps in and he says, I have an outrageous assignment for you.
[6:57] I have a brilliant life. I want you to live. A counter-cultural life I want you to live. I have things for you to do that are bigger than your life. And self-care is very, very important.

But I want you to care even more about the things I care about. And Jesus doesn't leave us floating here. Remember, this is the end of a longer sermon. Where he calls us to live as counter-cultural people.
Listen to some of the things Jesus calls us to do earlier in the sermon. He says, do good to those who hate you. What? It's madness. What?
Give to everyone who begs from you. Lend and expect nothing in return. Do not judge. Be merciful.
What exploded 2,000 years ago in the Mediterranean was not just some great ideas.
It wasn't just orthodox thinking. What exploded and captivated and ultimately took over the Roman Empire was a new way of being in the world.
[8:06] A new kind of community. Think about our cultural moment right now. So much anger.

So much division. And into that toxic soup. Living as genuine followers of Christ. Where our convictions are lived out.
Folks, we can be a magnetic community right now. All that to say. Jesus calls us to live this outrageous life.
To really live it. Not just ponder it. Or think about it. Because it's proof he lives in you. The alternative is to just think about Jesus.
Perhaps have this detached sort of intellectual appreciation of him. A help when he feels sad. But mostly you kind of just do your own thing. You live your life as you want.
[9:02] And if that is all you've ever had of Jesus. Your house has no foundation.

And again, I'm not trying to beat you up. They're just quite serious words. The passage gives us a promise. And it gives us a warning.
And this is the warning part. I read an article last week. Critiquing North American models of pastoral care.
Which is what you pay me to do, I guess. It was a lot more interesting than you can imagine.
It was an interview of a couple of heavyweights. A guy called Stanley Harawas. A guy called Will Willimon. And the gist of it was this. Basically, essentially what they were saying was.
[10:06] That some of the ways churches do pastoral care. Has been sort of corrupted by culture.
And this is not. These are my words, not from the article.

But basically they're saying. Some of the ways we do pastoral care. Is we're just making self-absorbed people more self-absorbed. By the way we do it.
And it was quite a provocative read actually. But I'll read two relevant quotes. I think they're quite helpful. People are encouraged to believe. That the purpose of being born. Is to be free.

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To self-construct your life as you please. Eventually the burden becomes unbearable. They find it impossible to choose their way. Into living a life worth living.
Sometimes I think the contemporary North American Christians. Are so beset by personal psychological problems. Because. And this is a great line. The church has failed to give us any assignment.
[11:03] More interesting. Than the care of our own souls. So for the record here. Jesus is calling us.

To live. A life of costly. Beauty. An outrageous life. A grand adventure.
With Jesus. And not a life of. Sort of just generic goodness. No. A life rooted. In the words. Of Christ. Folks. This is. This is just basic Christianity.
This is not crazy stuff. This is basic Christianity. And in fact. It's baked into. Our own church's vision. To be a community. Of contrast. Gripped by the gospel.
Of grace. A community. Of real difference. This is what we're aiming for. This is what I want. As your pastor. This is what I want. For you. Because. It tells me.
[12:00] It's proof. That your house. Has a strong foundation. Amen. Amen.

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