

STORM PROOFING YOU HOUSE Matthew 7:24-27

INTRODUCTION:

Sometimes, it is important to preach: to boldly and clearly proclaim the Word of God.

Sometimes, it is important to teach: to inform, instruct and educate about a passage of Scripture.

But sometimes, it is important to simply have an intimate, heart-to-heart talk with the family. This is one of those times. Some texts demand it. This is one of those texts.

Last week, my sermon included Matthew 7:21- - *“Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.”* Not everyone who says...but only he who does.

This week’s text stresses that not everyone who hears...but only he who does. Listen to these words of Jesus.

²⁴ “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

Do you see my point? Jesus warned that not everyone who hears these words of his will be safe but only those who put them into practice.

If I were to build a house, I’d want a good blueprint, a master builder, a great location and good materials. After all, I’d want this house to be my home for a long time.

I doubt that I will ever build a house. But I am building a life. And the life I build here determines the home I’ll have for eternity. So I certainly had better build with care.

Guys, we are all building lives. Just as bricks and boards build upon one another to make a house, likewise, day by day, decision by decision, deed by deed, each one builds upon the others to make a life. I want to talk with you about how to build our lives in such a way that we can withstand the storms that we will face.

Jesus' parable about the wise and foolish builders reveals three important truths we should remember as we build our lives.

I. THE INEVITABILITY OF STORMS

The first important truth we must remember is the inevitability of storms. It was the poet, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who observed, "Into each life some rain must fall."

Longfellow was correct. Everybody will suffer some misfortune. Each person will experience heartache, disappointment, pain and loss. As Bill and Gloria Gaither put it in one of their songs:

*Each one sheds his share of tears
And trouble troubles us all*

My dear family, I want you to know that storms of life are inevitable. Look at the person on your right. No, I really mean it. Take a moment and look at the person on your right. Now look at the person on your left. Seriously, look at the people on either side of you. Consider the person in front of you and the one behind you. Remember the people who played these instruments. Think about the one who led our singing.

And now look at me. We all have at least one thing in common. We've all weathered some storms. Some have weathered them more successfully than others but we have all weathered some storms. Some of these storms, you probably know about; some, undoubtedly you do not. But everyone here has had to endure storms.

And some are in the midst of a storm right now. You may not know that about your Brother or Sister but some of the people sitting near you are undoubtedly in the midst of a storm. I know this because in life, storms are inevitable. Jesus was referring to that.

Among those to whom Jesus first told this parable, some would end up being tortured for their faith in him. Maybe he was alluding to that storm, as well.

But in addition to the normal storms of life we all must face and the exceptional storms of persecution that some must endure, there is an ultimate storm we all will experience. That is the final storm that will come at the Judgment.

That storm is certainly inevitable. The King James translation of Hebrews 9:27 reads, "*It is appointed unto men once to die and after this the judgment.*" Or, as the NIV puts it, "*Man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.*"

Many of us will escape the storm of persecution for our faith. A few may appear to escape the normal storms of life. But none will escape the ultimate storm of the Judgment. Jesus wanted us to know about the inevitability of the storms and the certainty of The Storm.

II. THE IMPORTANCE OF FOUNDATIONS

Because Jesus wanted us to know about the inevitability of the storms, he also wanted us to know about the importance of foundations.

In the parable, the way Jesus told the story, hearing his words and putting them into practice is like building on a rock-solid foundation.

And, the way Jesus told the parable, hearing his words and not putting them into practice is like building on sand.

Structures built on a solid foundation will stand. Those on an unstable foundation will not stand; they will collapse.

I doubt that many will remember the details of an illustration I used last year in a Fathers' Day sermon. But even if you remember these details, it bears repeating.

Construction on the Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy began in 1773. It was built next to the Cathedral of Pisa as a bell tower. After only three stories were completed, work stopped because it was already beginning to lean. Eventually, it was completed to a height of 8 stories: 179 feet.

By 1990, scientists had reported that the tower was moving at the rate of about one-twentieth of an inch per year and was already 17 feet out of plumb. At that time, steps were taken to arrest the list of the famous tower.

Do you want to hear something interesting? The word "pisa" (the name for the town) literally means "marshy land," which gives some clue as to why the tower began to lean even before it was completed. Also--its foundation is only 10 feet deep. It is no wonder that the building never stood entirely erect: the foundation was flawed from the beginning.

We may criticize the builders of the bell tower but on what foundation are you building your life?

- Financial security? I need to tell you that it is sand.
- Building your life on what other people think? Sand.
- A career? Sand.
- A relationship? Sand
- Education? Reputation? Popularity? Sand. Sand. Sand.

- Your hard work, kind acts and good deeds? Sand...it's all sand. Only those who build their lives on the teachings of Jesus are building on a solid, sure and secure foundation.

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²⁶ "But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand."

Since we know that the storms are inevitable, a solid foundation is essential.

III. THE IDENTITY OF THE BUILDERS

In this parable, Jesus talked about storms, he talked about foundations and he talked about builders. There are, Jesus said, two types of builders. There are wise builders and there are foolish builders.

The wise builders are those who, with a view to the coming storms, take the time and make the effort to build on a solid foundation.

The foolish builders are those who, with no regard for the coming storms, build on an insecure, unsure and shaky foundation.

Now why do you suppose anyone would fail to insure a solid foundation for something as important as his life?

- Well, some may build on sand because they are lazy. It requires less effort to build where the ground is more easily leveled. And what can be more easily leveled than sand?

And why would anyone fail to found his life on the teachings of Jesus? For the same reason. It requires less effort to live by following our passions or the popular trends than the strict requirements of the narrow way that Jesus demands. It is easier to not obey God than it is to obey Him.

- Some build on sand because they are lazy. And some build on sand because they are arrogant. They think they know better than to believe that sand won't support a building.

And in the same way, some think they know better than to believe that they must obey God to have a sure foundation for their lives. They honestly believe that their way is better than God's, more certain and more secure than His.

- Some do not build on the rock because they are stubborn. They started to build on what looked like rock and only later learned that it was sand. They started out in all innocence and with good

intentions and now they hate to admit they were mistaken,

Did you know that the same thing happens when people are deciding how to live their lives? They start out a certain way...perhaps in all innocence, unaware that they are not putting into practice the words of Jesus. Later on, they learn that they have failed to obey the Lord. But rather than change the way they are living, their stubborn pride causes them to continue as they had begun.

- Still others may not be building on the rock because they are immature. They would rather hurry up and build now, even if they know it is wrong, than to take the time to dig down to rock,

The desire for instant gratification causes some people to live their lives for today rather than to be willing to defer pleasure until it is the right time and the right circumstance.

But in Jesus' parable, do you know what is **not** a cause for some to build on sand? It may be because of laziness, arrogance, stubbornness or immaturity. But it is not because of ignorance. In Jesus' parable, the difference between the wise builder and the foolish one is not that one had heard his words and one had not. Both the wise and the foolish had heard the words of Jesus. Both appear to have understood the words of Jesus. There is no reason to think that some believed Jesus and some did not.

No, the difference between the wise and the foolish seems to have been only one thing. The wise man is the one who heard the words of Jesus, understood them, believed them and put them into practice. The foolish man is the one who heard the words of Jesus, understood them, believed them and failed to put them into practice. Wise people are hearers and doers of the Word. Foolish people are hearers who are not doers of the Word.

CONCLUSION:

The storm, the time of ultimate testing, is assuredly coming...to all of us. The storm will reveal the nature, the characteristics and the quality of the foundation you've laid for your life.

Isaiah 8:16 describes Jesus Christ as the cornerstone upon which God's temple is built. The disciples of Jesus are God's dwelling place.

I Corinthians 3:10-11 cautions, "*But each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.*"

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You have heard. I'm sure you have understood. Do you believe? Will you obey?

There is a clear and concise way of expressing what it means to hear and do what Jesus said. It is simply to "Trust and Obey."

INVITATION: #571 – *"Trust and Obey"*