

George describes familiarity with Jesus as one of the enemy's most subtle tools -- in what ways has your familiarity with scripture or church routine caused you to stop letting God's word truly confront and change you?

The sermon draws a sharp distinction between knowing about Jesus and genuinely trusting Jesus -- where in your life do you find it hardest to believe that Jesus is not just real, but right?

James warns in James 1 that hearing the word without doing it is a form of self-deception -- what is one area of your life where you may be deceiving yourself by assuming that hearing or knowing is enough?

George points out that both builders heard the same message, yet only one acted on it -- what does that say about the danger of sitting in church week after week without allowing the sermon to reshape how you actually live?

The sermon suggests that wisdom rarely looks spectacular and most often appears in ordinary, unnoticed decisions -- can you think of a time when quiet faithfulness in a hidden moment proved to be more spiritually significant than a visible, public act?

Jesus says in Matthew 7 that storms are a certainty, not a possibility -- how has a storm in your own life revealed the true foundation you were building on, and what did that revelation teach you?

George argues that spiritual maturity is often measured by information rather than transformation -- how would you honestly assess your own growth: are you collecting scripture, or is scripture collecting you?

The crowds in Matthew 7 were amazed at Jesus's teaching but Matthew never tells us whether they obeyed -- in what ways might your own response to Jesus stop at admiration or agreement rather than moving toward genuine surrender and obedience?

George describes the authority of Jesus as comforting rather than frightening because it comes from a king with nail-scarred hands -- how does the sacrificial nature of Jesus's authority change the way you relate to his commands?

The sermon closes by distinguishing between admirers and disciples -- what would it practically look like for you to stop blending into the crowd and begin arranging your daily life around the words of Jesus?

Small Group Guide

"Build on the Rock" | Matthew 7:24-29

Summer on the Mount - Week 8

BEFORE YOU MEET

Encourage group members to read Matthew 7:24-29 and, if possible, review Matthew 5-7 as a whole before gathering. Remind the group that this session closes out the entire Summer on the Mount series, so conversations may naturally draw from previous weeks.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. Hearing is not the same as building. Both builders in Jesus' parable heard the same words. The difference was never what they heard but what they did with what they heard. Familiarity with Jesus' words is not the same as faithfulness to them.
2. The foundation is hidden, but it is everything. The world rewards visibility. The kingdom produces stability. The deepest work God does in a life almost always happens when no one else is watching.
3. Storms are not a possibility. They are a certainty. Jesus does not say "if" the storm comes. He says "when." Storms do not build foundations. They reveal them.
4. Wisdom is not about information. It is about trust. The wise builder was not wiser because he knew more. He was wiser because he trusted Jesus more. Spiritual maturity is not measured by how much scripture we can collect, but by how much scripture can collect us.
5. Jesus taught with authority because he is the King. The crowds were amazed not just at what Jesus said but at how he said it. He did not quote other teachers. He spoke as one

who had the final word. That authority is grounded in who he is, the Son of God who gave himself away on a cross.

6. Amazement is not the destination. Matthew records that the crowd was amazed, but he never tells us what they did next. The story is intentionally left unfinished because the decision now belongs to us.

OPENING QUESTION

Use this to warm up the group before diving into the text. Keep it light and accessible.

Think about a time you received advice that you knew was good but did not immediately act on. What made it hard to put into practice?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Section 1: Hearing vs. Doing

The sermon pointed out that both builders heard the exact same words from Jesus. What does it say about Jesus' warning that he aimed it at people who were listening to him, not people who had walked away?

George mentioned that "familiarity can be one of the enemy's most subtle tools." In what ways have you experienced that in your own life? How can someone become so accustomed to the words of Jesus that they stop letting those words confront them?

James 1:22 warns against deceiving ourselves by hearing the word without doing it. Who, according to that verse, is most at risk of self-deception? Why is that uncomfortable?

George said, "It is possible to know Bible stories without letting the Bible reshape your story." What is the difference between those two things in practical, everyday terms?

Section 2: The Foundation Nobody Sees

The sermon made the point that nobody compliments a foundation. How does that idea apply to the spiritual disciplines and quiet decisions that shape a life of faith? Can you think of someone in your life whose foundation has become visible during a hard season?

George described wisdom as wonderfully ordinary, things like choosing forgiveness, choosing integrity, choosing prayer before panic. What is one ordinary decision you face regularly that is actually a spiritual foundation-building moment in disguise?

The sermon drew a contrast: "The world rewards visibility, but the kingdom produces stability." Where do you feel the tension between those two things most in your own life?

Section 3: The Storm

Jesus uses present-tense certainty when describing the storm. He does not say "if." How does accepting the certainty of storms, rather than hoping to avoid them, change the way you think about building your life now?

George said, "Your storm is not evidence that Jesus has abandoned you." Have you ever believed, even quietly, that faithfulness should lead to an easier life? Where does that assumption come from, and how does the Sermon on the Mount challenge it?

"Storms don't build foundations. They reveal them." If a significant storm hit your life today, what do you think it would reveal about what you have been building on? Take a moment to answer that honestly before sharing with the group.

Section 4: Trust Over Knowledge

The sermon made a distinction between believing Jesus is real and believing Jesus is right. What is the difference? Why does that distinction matter?

George asked a series of questions about whether we trust Jesus when it costs us something: when forgiveness is harder than revenge, when generosity feels risky, when purity is mocked, when our identity is being pulled in other directions. Which one of those is most personally challenging for you right now?

George said, "Following Jesus has never meant having all the answers. It means deciding who you will trust when you don't have the answers." How does that reframe what faith actually looks like in daily life?

Section 5: The Crowd's Response and Ours

Matthew ends the Sermon on the Mount by telling us the crowd was amazed, but he never tells us what they did next. Why do you think Matthew left the story unfinished? What does that ask of the reader?

The sermon closed with the question Jesus has been asking throughout the entire chapter from multiple angles: "What are you going to do with me?" As this series ends, how would you answer that question honestly right now?

PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

Choose one or two of the following to discuss as a group or to take home as a personal challenge for the coming week.

1. The Foundation Audit Take 15 minutes this week in a quiet place and honestly ask yourself: What am I actually building my life on right now? Consider your time, your money, your energy, and your attention. Write down what you find. Bring it to God in prayer.

2. The Hearing-to-Doing Gap Identify one specific teaching from the Sermon on the Mount that you have heard and understood but have not yet put into practice. Name it. Write it down. Then take one concrete step this week to act on it.

3. The Ordinary Moment Practice George described wisdom as thousands of ordinary decisions that quietly say, "Jesus, I trust you." Choose one recurring moment in your week, a commute, a meal, a meeting, a conversation, and intentionally use it as a foundation-building moment. Decide ahead of time how you will honor Jesus in that moment.

4. The Foundation-Building Conversation Think of one person in your life who is building on sand, not necessarily someone hostile to Jesus, but someone who has heard about him and remained in the crowd of the amazed. Pray for them by name this week. Ask God to open a natural door for a conversation.

5. The Trust Inventory Review the commands from the Sermon on the Mount covered over the past eight weeks. For each one, ask yourself honestly: Do I believe Jesus is right about this? Write down where your answer is a confident yes and where it is more of a reluctant or uncertain yes. Bring those uncertain areas to God and to a trusted friend or mentor.

CLOSING REFLECTION

Read Matthew 7:24-27 aloud together as a group one final time.

Then close with this question for personal, quiet reflection before you pray:

"Right now, in this season of my life, am I building or am I just listening?"

CLOSING PRAYER

Close your time by praying specifically for the foundations being built in each group member's life. Ask God to make your group people who do not merely hear but who trust Jesus enough to build everything on his words. Pray for anyone in the group who is currently in a storm, that what is being revealed would draw them closer to the King rather than further away.

This guide was developed from the sermon "Build on the Rock" preached at Spencer Christian Church as part of the Summer on the Mount series.

5-Day Bible Reading Plan and Devotional Guide

Building on the Rock: Trusting Jesus With Your Whole Life

Day 1: Hearing Is Not Enough

Reading: Matthew 7:24-27; James 1:22-25

Devotional: There is a quiet danger that settles into the lives of people who have spent years in church. It is the danger of familiarity. We learn the stories, memorize the verses, and know when to say amen, all while the words of Jesus wait patiently at the door of our lives, never quite invited all the way in. James warns that hearing without doing is a form of self-deception. The person who is deceived is not the one who rejects Scripture outright, but the one who assumes that hearing it is the same as obeying it. Today, ask yourself honestly: which words of Jesus have you heard many times but not yet acted on?

Reflection Question: Is there a specific command of Jesus that you know well but have been slow to put into practice?

Practical Application: Identify one teaching of Jesus from the past week and write down one concrete step you will take today to apply it to your life.

Day 2: The Foundation Nobody Sees

Reading: 1 Corinthians 3:10-15; Psalm 11:3

Devotional: Nobody compliments a foundation. When a house is being built, visitors admire the framing, the windows, the roof line. The concrete slab beneath it all goes unnoticed and unremarked upon. Yet when the storm arrives, the foundation is the only thing that matters. The kingdom of God works the same way. The deepest and most important work God does in a human life is almost always invisible to everyone around you.

The quiet morning prayer, the temptation resisted in private, the forgiveness extended when no one was watching. These hidden moments are not small. They are the substance of a life built on Christ. Your Father sees every one of them.

Reflection Question: What hidden, ordinary acts of faithfulness have you been tempted to undervalue because no one else has noticed them?

Practical Application: Commit to one private spiritual discipline this week, whether prayer, Scripture reading, or an act of generosity, done with no intention of anyone else knowing about it.

Day 3: Storms Reveal What Was Already There

Reading: Romans 5:1-5; 1 Peter 1:6-7

Devotional: Jesus does not say if the storm comes. He says the storm came. The rain, the rising streams, the beating wind are not hypothetical threats. They are the guaranteed reality of a human life lived in a broken world. A storm does not create your foundation. It reveals the one you already have. This is both a sobering and a deeply hopeful truth. Sobering because we cannot wait until the storm arrives to start building. Hopeful because the storms we have already survived are not wasted. Peter tells us that trials, when met with faith, produce something that cannot be manufactured any other way: a tested and proven trust in God that outlasts the pain.

Reflection Question: Looking back at a difficult season in your life, what did that storm reveal about what your life was built on?

Practical Application: Write down one way a past storm strengthened your faith rather than destroyed it. Share that story with someone this week who may be in the middle of their own storm right now.

Day 4: Trust Is the Heart of Wisdom

Reading: Proverbs 3:5-8; Matthew 6:25-33

Devotional: The wise builder in Jesus's parable was not distinguished by a higher intelligence or a more impressive resume. He was distinguished by trust. He heard the words of Jesus and arranged his life around them, even when that arrangement was costly, inconvenient, or countercultural. Real wisdom has always looked like this. It is not the accumulation of information. It is the daily decision to believe that Jesus knows better about your life than you do. When he says do not worry, he is asking whether you trust him. When he says seek first the kingdom, he is asking the same question. Every command is an invitation to trust the one who gave it.

Reflection Question: Which teaching of Jesus do you find hardest to trust, and what does that resistance reveal about where your deepest confidence actually rests?

Practical Application: Take one area of your life where worry or self-reliance has taken over and spend five deliberate minutes in prayer today, surrendering that specific area to God by name.

Day 5: The King With Nail-Scarred Hands

Reading: Matthew 7:28-29; Philippians 2:5-11; Hebrews 4:14-16

Devotional: The crowds were amazed because Jesus taught with authority unlike anything they had ever heard. He did not quote other teachers. He spoke as the source. That authority belongs to the Son of God, the promised King, the one who holds all things together. But here is what makes his authority unlike any other power in this world: the King used his authority not to protect himself, but to give himself away. The hands that pointed toward the narrow gate were eventually stretched out on a cross. The voice that called

people to trust him also cried out in forgiveness for the very ones who rejected him. His authority does not demand your fear. It invites your faith.

Reflection Question: How does knowing that the one who commands your obedience is the same one who died for your failures change the way you approach following him?

Practical Application: Close this five-day guide by writing a simple, honest prayer of response to Jesus, not a polished performance, but a genuine answer to his question: will you trust me enough to build your life on my words?