

Will It Last?

Matthew 7:24-27

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

KIDS SERMON

Raise your hand if you like seeing buildings get built! What have you seen built? Who knows what is the first thing builders build on a building? (Foundation).

Okay, well we're going to test out how important having a good foundation is. I've got some blocks here, to build something with, and I got some balls here that we'll use as a foundation... to go on the bottom. Who wants to come up and try to build a tower with these balls as the foundation? (Volunteer... give them a hand!). Why was that so hard?

Now let's try it this way (pull out 4 square blocks). Let's use these as our foundation. Now who wants to try to build a tower? (Volunteer... give them a hand!)

In the Bible, Jesus talks about how important it is to use good foundations not only for building towers and buildings, but also to build your life on. And Jesus is the only foundation that is strong enough to keep you from toppling over (push Jenga set). So always make sure to build your life on Jesus. Let's Pray.

PRE SERMON

Earlier this summer, I had the opportunity to take a 3 week Sabbatical to Israel, with three of my favorite people.

—>**Hezekiah's Tunnel Picture.**

Pastor Jacob, Tony Serna one of our worship leaders this morning, and Jackson Henry, our pastor apprentice. And this morning I'm going to preach on God's truth we saw first hand in the Holy Land.

It will be a little different than our normal sermons where we preach from a passage of Scripture, but as we will see this morning, God's truth is richly expressed through the Historical environment and Geographical reality of the Promised Land, and honors “sola scriptura,” “by Scripture alone.”

Now I want to assure you, this morning is NOT a slide show or recap of our trip to Israel, Yawn, that'd be boring, and we're going to geek out a little about history and geography, to really discover the truth that God is inviting you to join Him in building something great, that will last for all eternity.

PRAYER

INTRODUCTION

As we start today, just take a moment and think back on what you spent your week on. Did you spend time exercising? How many hours did you play video games? Did you wake up to do your devotion? Did you get that project done at work? Did you catch that wave or call that friend, or spend time with your family? How did you spend your week?

But perhaps a better question is “What lasting value came from how you spent your week?”

Today we are asking the question, “How can you make your life count?” How can you, like our Scripture reading said, build something that will weather the storms of life and ultimately, impact eternity?

And to explore these questions, we’re going to walk through the land of Israel and look at two men, who each set out to build something that would last.

HEROD

You may be familiar with a man named Herod the Great. There was a lot of Herod’s in Scripture, but Herod the Great was the first one. And the only thing we know about him from Scripture is from [Matthew 2](#).

You may remember the story, Herod the Great was king of the Jews, and he heard from some traveling wise men, that a new king of the Jews was born, and so Herod tried to kill this new baby king.

—> [Matthew 2:16](#) Then when Herod saw that he had been tricked by the magi, he became very enraged, and sent and slew all the male children who were in Bethlehem and all its vicinity, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the magi.

And that’s the only verse the Bible gives this man. What a legacy! But history tells us that Herod not only killed innocent babies, he killed one of his wives, a few of his sons, and countless others who he feared could take his kingdom from him.

Let’s see how his kingdom is doing after just 2,000 years.

CAESAREA MARITIMA - Power

Power. Around 40 BC, Herod gained Power. He convinced the Roman Empire to grant him “legal authority” to be the “King of the Jews.” So to confirm his title as king, Herod went to Jerusalem with an army and overthrew the Jewish King. And then began a number of incredible, building projects that would secure his power in the area, largely by connecting Israel to Rome.

But Rome didn’t walk to walk 1400 miles to get to Israel, they wanted to go by boat. But Israel didn’t have any sea ports because the Mediterranean’s current

—> picture of mediterranean sea currents

flows from the delta of the Nile River east, and deposits all the Nile soil onto the shore of Israel, causing a very straight shoreline, with no ports! So what did Herod do? He built one! Caesarea Maritima

—> Caesarea Maritima Picture

This is the remains of Herod’s Palace he built here, and this is his swimming pool, that was filled with fresh water, that came from miles away, with his palace just past it. & you may be familiar with this city name, Caesarea, from your Bible readings. It was here, in [Acts 10](#), where the apostle Peter preached to a roman centurion, guarding the sea port, named Cornelius, and the Holy Spirit fell on the Gentiles for the first time here ([Acts 10:44](#)).

But the reason Cornelius and the Romans were here at all, was to guard the impossible harbor for more Romans to come.

—> Caesarea Maritima model

This is a model of the size and location the port would’ve been. And to build this, he made these massive molds and filled them with Ash and Lime, and floated them out into the ocean, and when they

got to the right spot, he filled them with water, and it made a type of concrete, and the molds sank, creating one building block, on which to lay another building block. And he did that until he built an under water wall that was 120' tall, and 2000' long..., building a sea port

And with the port built, Rome could send soldiers, merchants, goods directly to Israel. But just because he built it, didn't mean Rome would come. Herod had to make Rome, WANT to come to Israel, so he made Caesarea Maritima a little bit of Rome away from Home.

Just outside the port, he built a temple to Caesar Augustus, so when a Roman boat pulled into his harbor, they'd see a roman temple, and then that arriving Roman would look directly above that temple, and see another Roman temple, identical to it, 40 miles inland, on top of a hill in Samaria.

Just outside the harbor, Herod built a hippodrome

—> Chariot Race Picture

to host Roman chariot races every 5 years.

He even made Caesarea Maritima LOOK like Rome. Rome is built out of beautiful, white marble stones, and greek mosaics. Israel is made of Limestone, with no mosaics. So what does Herod do? He plasters the light brownish, Cenomanian limestone, with pearly white, Eocene limestone, making it look like Marble.

And then, just because he's showing off... Herod puts a massive mosaic, right at the edge of the harbor. And while I was walking around the area, I found a little piece of that mosaic. *Mosaic Stone*

With Caesarea Maritima built, Herod the Great had access to Roman military and economic power. But does building a kingdom of power, stand the test of time?

- Perhaps you graduated with a prestigious degree, & can write your name with lots of letters and abbreviations before and after.
- You've put in the overtime again and again, and earned a high position in your company
- You're an influencer on Instagram.

But power isn't only felt in the workplace.

- Parents, how do you use your power in the home with your kids?
- Husband, do you claim your "spiritual power" and lord it over your wife?
- Bread winner, do you use the money you make to gain an upper hand in the decisions you and your spouse make?
- Roommate, if your name is the only one on the lease, do you use that against your roommate?

What do you use your power for? Do you use it to build your own kingdom?

For Herod the Great, one of his most notorious legacies of power, Caesarea Maritima, lies in ruins. So much so, that a random tourist, like me, can have a rock in his pocket from the grand mosaic he built which was meant to showcase his power.

And from this, we discover truth number one from the Holy Land today.

—> Your power won't last.

Gaining great power to build your own kingdom, leads to ruin.

< But it's not just POWER that you may be tempted to build your kingdom with. You may be tempted to build a kingdom built on People-Pleasing. >

HEROD'S TEMPLE MOUNT

People Pleasing. This is the Dome of the Rock,

—> Dome of the Rock Picture

And Since the 7th century, it has been controlled by Muslims who believe the Prophet Muhammad ascended to Heaven here. And for Jews and Christians, we believe this is where Abraham nearly offered his son, Isaac, as well as the location of Solomon's Temple, where God's presence resided.

And to this day, because the Jews don't know where the Holy of Holies was located on top of the Temple Mount, they don't go up there just so they don't accidentally step into the Holy of Holies and break the Torah.

—> Temple Mount Sign Picture

Here you see a devout Jew worshipping as close as he can get to the Temple Mount without going in, and you see the sign reminding Jews to not go in.

This Temple Mount is another one of the Marvels that Herod the Great built. 1 Kings 6 tells us that the original, Jewish temple was built by King Solomon.

—> 1 Kings 6:1-2 Now it came about in the four hundred and eightieth year after the sons of Israel came out of the land of Egypt, in the fourth year of Solomon's reign over Israel, in the month of Ziv which is the second month, that he began to build the house of the Lord. As for the house which King Solomon built for the Lord, its length was sixty cubits and its width twenty cubits and its height thirty cubits

—> Temple Mount Picture

Solomon's Temple was built on top of this hill, called Mount Moriah. And the yellow wall in the middle is Solomon's Temple Mount. An 18 acre platform built on the slopes of this hill. And it was constricted to this size because its surrounded by the Kidron Valley to the East, and the Central Valley to the West, and to the south was a descent onto a smaller hill where David's palace and city was located.

So when Herod shows up on the scene, he looks at this Temple Mount, and he wants to make this temple Plaza bigger, which means he has to make the mountain it sits on. Bigger. So he doubles the size of it, making the Temple Mount 37 acres.

The walls to hold this new mountain measure 16' thick, and 130' tall, and are made of stones that weigh on average, 10 tons each.

What motivated this guy to do this? Herod wasn't racially Jewish, his father descended from Esau, Jacob's brother, So Herod was by blood, an Edomite, and his mom was a desert princess. So why did he invest so much into doubling the size of the Jewish Temple Mount?

The famous Jewish Historian, Josephus gives us an insight, and I quote

"Herod undertook a very great work, that is, to build of himself the temple of God, and make it larger in compass, and to raise it to a most magnificent altitude, as esteeming it to be the most glorious of all his actions, as it really was, to bring it to perfection, and that this would be sufficient for an everlasting memorial of him."

Herod needed everyone, to think he was awesome. He craved attention. And the people he was king over, hated him, because he stole their power, and he wasn't racially Jewish. So in an effort to gain their approval, he made his most magnificent project one that would please his people! Herod was a people

pleaser!

But you don't have to build a Temple Mount to be a people pleaser. People pleasing comes in all shapes and sizes. You're people pleasing when

- You have a hard time admitting that your feelings are hurt.
- Your people pleasing when you want everyone to think you're the best.
- Its when you avoid conflicts,
- Or if you struggle to say "no," You're people pleasing.

But people pleasing isn't a strong foundation, and Herod the Great discovered how true Proverbs 29 is.

—> Proverbs 29:25 The fear of man (AKA People Pleasing) brings a snare, but he who trusts in the Lord will be exalted”

And from this verse, we learn truth #2 from the Holy Land.

—> **Your People-Pleasing won't last.
If you build your kingdom on the backs of everyone liking you, you're doomed to fail.**

< But maybe you're not tempted to build your kingdom on Power, and you're not tempted to build your kingdom on People Pleasing, but there's still 1 more temptation Herod tried to build his kingdom on... Pride. >

HERODIUM

Welcome, to Herodium. Herod's place of Pride. Just 8 miles south of Jerusalem, it was here that Herod first defeated the Jews during his conquest for the crown. So it was here, that he built a palace and named it after himself.

—> **Herodium hill Picture**

Herod created Herodium by moving dirt from one hill to make another hill taller, you can see the shorter hill on the left that he took the dirt from. But the amount of dirt Herod had to move isn't what makes Herodium amazing. Herodium is amazing because even though there are no natural water sources here, and its nearly a desert region, Herodium had a pool twice the size of an Olympic pool

—> **Herodium diagram with pool**

and was deep enough to accommodate boats. He grew a garden on top of the hill, and had bath houses. It was filled with water from aqueducts that ran from a spring 4 miles to the west.

How did Herod do this? Remember, his mom was a desert princess... She was a Nabotean... desert, water geniuses. Imagine the Fremen in the movie, Dune... So Herod uses this family connection, and he builds multiple desert palaces, each boasting of opulent water resources, and he shows off for his own glory.

And this temptation of pride is still around today. But I'm not talking about the pride you have for your sons who just hiked the Na Pali Coast, as my sons did this week. (Great job sons!) That's good pride. And as a church, we should be proud that we ran a VBS this summer, where 39 kids made decisions for Jesus. Pride in doing God-honoring work or character is a good thing. But pride that glorifies yourself, will ruin you!

And the problem of pride is that it's like sugar, its in everything, and the ants are coming!

- Its pride when you get called out, and you justify yourself instead of apologizing.

- Its pride when you don't confess your sins.
- Its pride when you think you can get away with it.
- Its pride when you think you don't need the Church.
- Its pride when you "just are the way you are."
- Its pride when you name drop.
- Its pride when you assume others will just take care of something for you.

Herod built Herodium in 20 BC. At the height of his pride. But just 16 years later, in 4 BC, Herod became terribly sick, and died a horrific death and was buried at Herodium. But he didn't rest in peace.

Just 70 years after his death, the Jews captured Herodium, and found his tomb, and smashed it into pieces, and there Herod and his tomb lay scattered for 2 millennia in dirt, only to be discovered again in 2007. Here's a picture of Herod's tomb, reconstructed as much as they could find.

—> Herod's tomb

—> Proverbs 16:18 Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before stumbling.

Which reveals our 3rd truth from the Holy Land.

—> Your pride won't last.

< **Having seen that your power, people pleasing, and your pride won't last, what can you give your life to, that will last forever?** >

PETER - CAESAREA PHILIPPI

The last place we'll go today is the Northern tip of Israel, to Caesarea Philippi. A pagan city built to honor the greek god of fertility, Pan.

And Peter, after following Jesus for a couple years, was led by Jesus, with the other disciples, here.

—> Caesarea Philippi Cave

And at the top of the city is a large cliff, with a water spring coming out of it. Here you see the cliff at the top with the cave on the left, and the spring at the bottom, but back in Jesus' day, this spring came out from this cave. And this cave went down deep into the earth, and in Greek culture, this is known as a Plutonium, a portal to the underworld, the Gate of Hades. And to appease the gods of this underworld portal, the residents would engage in horribly detestable acts right here. So a very Pagan city, probably no honorable Jews here.

Yet Jesus brought His disciples to this spot, to ask them a very important question

—> Matthew 16:15 He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

To which Peter, replied,

—> Matthew 16:16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

And its after this statement, with the disciples viewing this rocky, pagan, Gates of Hades, that Jesus tells Peter...

—> Matthew 16:18- I also say to you that you are Peter (Petros / rock), and upon this rock (Petra / rock) I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it."

—> (Leave verse on screen until below)

Jesus is using a play on words with the greek words for “Rock,” Petros, and Petra, but He’s also using a play with the geography... they are at a rocky cave, I also picked up a rock here, *Show Rock*... where Jesus declared that He will build His church on this rock.

—> Take Verse off screen

But there isn’t a church building here... would’ve been a cool illustration if there was, but I think its even cooler that there isn’t... because look where Jesus’ church is today... His church is still being built, even 9,000 miles away in Hawaii, and it’s growing. Jesus’ Kingdom is the only one that will last. Which brings us to our final truth today.

—> **Build your life on the rock of Jesus.**

And this man, Peter, Petros, the rock, reminds us what the church actually is in [1 Peter 2](#). Years after Jesus told Peter He would build His church upon this rock at Caesarea Philippi, Peter draws upon this imagery and writes his letter to Christians, and tells them

—> [1 Peter 2:5-6](#) you also, as living stones (lithos) there are small, usable, building stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. For this is contained in Scripture: BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHOICE STONE, A PRECIOUS CORNER stone, AND HE WHO BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED.

You are the Church, and you won’t be disappointed if you build your life on Jesus.

APPLICATION

But there are a lot of ways this world will tempt you to be like Herod *mosaic stone* and build your own kingdom on a crumbly foundation of your own power, on people pleasing, or on your pride. But those won’t last.

Today Jesus is inviting you, *Caesarea Philippi Rock* to join Him in His building project, and be a stone that He builds His eternal kingdom with.

I hope you choose to be a part of Jesus’ building project.