

1. How does the illustration of the trees and fruit help explain the reasons that Christians should focus on self-examination rather than judging others?
2. How does the illustration of the tree and its fruit point us to the doctrine of conversion?
3. Comparing verse 46 with Romans 10:9–10, does Jesus' teaching suggest that it is possible to confess with the mouth and not be saved?
4. Does being a disciple of Jesus prevent us from suffering the adverse effects of the storm?
5. Looking at this passage, or others in the Bible, how can Christians build a solid foundation for our Christian lives?

3 Quotes from Charles Spurgeon, "On Laying Foundations"

To feign repentance and faith is not difficult, but genuine godliness is heart-work, and requires thought, care, sincerity, prayerfulness, and watchfulness. Believe me, real religion is no sport. He that would be saved will find it to be no jesting matter..., and he that is easy about the thing, and thinks it is nothing more than the conjuror's "Heigh, presto, done," has made a fatal mistake. "Strive," saith Christ, "to enter into the strait gate." The Spirit striveth in us mightily, and often works us to an agony. The crown of eternal glory is not won without fighting, nor the prize of our high calling received without running;... Believe me, dear hearers, this saving of trouble will turn out to be a making of trouble, and, before matters end, the hardest way will turn out to be the easiest way.

I see the man: he lost his money and became poor, but he did not give up his faith: "It could not shake it." He was ridiculed and slandered, and many of his former friends gave him the cold shoulder; but "It could not shake it." He went to Jesus under his great trial and he was sustained: "It could not shake it." He was very sick and his spirit was depressed within him, but still he held his confidence in Christ: "It could not shake it." He was near to die; he knew that he must soon depart out of this world, but all the pains of death and the certainty of dissolution could not shake him. He died as he lived, firm as a rock, rejoicing as much as ever, nay, rejoicing more, because he was nearer to the kingdom and to the fruition of all his hopes. "It could not shake it." It is a grand thing to have a faith which cannot be shaken.

I would have you be self-contained, growing each man into Christ for himself, rooted and grounded in love and faith and every holy grace. Then when the worst storm that ever blew on mortal man shall come, it will be said of your faith, "It could not shake it." I beseech you who are now seeking Christ to take care that you build well, that you may stand long in our Zion, steadfast and unmovable. God grant it for Christ's sake. Amen.