

The house
Matthew 7 vs 24-27

It's crunch time. We are at the end of the SOM and the series. So rich, so informative, so challenging, what will we do with all of this? Knock on the door.. choose the road less travelled... live like the birds who don't worry... intimately connected to Jesus so that my tree can bear good fruit that lasts...so what's left to say after all this teaching by Jesus? Well, that's what the last image is all about: The house (**pic**). In some ways this last image represents the key to the whole message. If we don't get the teaching on the house right, everything else that went before means nothing. So, let's take note:

Matthew 7 vs 24-27 (slide)

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.”

Can you see it?

Two scenes (slide)

So similar. It's like the spot the difference picture (**pic of houses**)

Two builders

Both built similar houses

Similar locations

Faced the same circumstances- winds storms and rains

One simple difference brought about completely opposite outcomes. One stood, the other collapsed. One was wise and the other foolish. The only difference was the foundation and yet it made all the difference.

Two foundations (slide)

Jesus says that your life is like a house and you can choose to build your house on one of **Two Foundations**. Once again, you are free to decide. One of them works and the other one doesn't. One of them is solid and dependable. The other is unreliable and sure to bring you disaster.

So, what is the foundation?

Jesus? How does the passage start?

The one who hears and does is wise... the one who hears and doesn't is foolish

There are hearers and there are doers. **The foundation is OBEDIENCE (slide)**

James 1 vs 22 (slide)

²² Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. ²³ Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror ²⁴ and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. ²⁵ But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues in it—not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it—they will be blessed in what they do.

How many sermons have you heard? Do they have any value if they don't bring some kind of action for change? When I leave from any interaction with the Word, do I forget it, or it is before me changing me as I choose to live it? There are always two people in church. Those who will listen and do nothing and those who will listen and put it into practice. The one is wise, the other foolish. One will have a house that will endure, the other will see devastation. How often do we get challenged, leave and nothing changes? How often do we read and hear what God thinks of us, how He loves us and values us and we go away and forget who we are? If I don't live it my house will not stand firm when the storms come.

We church going folk get really good at hearing the truth. We listen to sermons and podcasts. We read books. We go to Bible studies and life groups.

Some of us even go to seminary.

But what really matters is whether or not that truth is making a difference in your life. That is the choice you have to make. That is what determines whether or not your house will stand. The difference between the two houses?

They both know the truth, only one lives it out.

It's not the act of reading my Bible or going to church that defines me as a Christ follower, it's what I do with what I have heard and read that defines me.

Barna group- Research on number of Christians in the US. They used the term "Born again"

In this research the term 'born-again' refers to people who say things. They say, 'I have a personal commitment to Jesus Christ and it's important to me.' They say, 'I believe that I will go to heaven when I die. I've confessed my sins and accepted Jesus as my Savior.' And then, the Barna Group takes them at their word.

The issue here is that born-again Christians are defined what they say and not what they do. The NT and Jesus defines His followers by what they do. The very term Christian was not the name used by Jesus or the early church. It was the name given by outsiders to Christ followers (little Christs) because they lived so differently EG they will know you are my Disciples if you love one another and that's what happened. It's what drew people to the gospel. It is impossible to separate faith and works. There is a name for those who do- hypocrisy.

James 2 vs 14-20 (slide)

¹⁴ What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? ¹⁵ Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. ¹⁶ If one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and well fed," but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? ¹⁷ In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

¹⁸ But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds."

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds. ¹⁹ You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.

²⁰ You foolish person, do you want evidence that faith without deeds is useless?

James is not saying that you earn your way to heaven by works. It's the tree and the fruit. Obedience/deeds and the way I live is a proof of the faith that I have found in Jesus

Grandfather – read Bible every night (mags, never mentioned His name, never prayed with me).

Chaplain and army guys – devotion and Bible reading- foolish

The Bible only has power if it is lived out. It's a book of action.

Kid's song

Read your Bible, pray every day and you'll grow. Read your Bible do what it says and you'll grow. Obedience is key

Matt 28 vs 19-20 (slide)

¹⁹ Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.

My level of obedience is a measure of my level of surrender (slide). It is difficult to obey God in an area of my life that is not under His lordship. That is why we need to remember that the secret is full surrender, so I am fully connected to the Vine who then produces fruit in me.

After decades of sowing and minimal reaping in the Muslim world we are starting to see unprecedented fruit (Ramadan, Syria). From almost nothing there are now 100's of DMM's that have started. What is fueling these movements? A simple practice of hear and obey Bible studies. What could it do in our midst? Our hope is that Life groups leaders will start doing more of this so we move from being hearers to doers.

One storm (slide)

In the story there is only one thing that is singular- the storm

Let's be clear that this storm came from the outside. Neither had control over it. The storm was not self-produced. There are a lot of self-inflicted storms that a life of obedience certainly protects me from.

God's words are there for our best, so we can live the abundant life. The life of obedience requires that I trust God's judgement. God loves us so much that he tells us the difference between what is good for us and what will destroy us. The things that will destroy us, ruin our relationships, damage our health, steal our joy, and devastate our sense of fulfillment—those things God calls "sin", and he tells us to stay away from it because sin will kill us. The wages of sin is death. When we hear the truth and choose to live by it, that truth protects us from sin's destruction. But so often we hear the truth and choose to leave it at that, perhaps because we don't trust it, or because we have some other option that we like better. If we choose to simply hear the truth without doing it, then we will be

faced with the devastating effects of sin. Sin is a poison. It always kills. Sin certainly is into tearing down houses.

BUT there are storms, wind and rain that come from the outside, which I have no control over. Like the one's in this story. Both houses experienced the same conditions.

My righteousness or life of obedience does not spare me from the wind, rain and storms that come from the outside

Matt 5 vs 45 (slide)

..He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.

We all live in the same broken world. We weather the same storms, work the same jobs, do the same things, go to the same churches, hear the same preaching, and have similar lifestyles. These two builders were so similar, how are we able to see who is wise and who is foolish? The storm...you want to know what foundation your life is built on? Wait till the storms come.

Job ch 1 vs 1 (slide)

In the land of Uz there lived a man whose name was Job. This man was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil.

Here is a man who is a doer of the word. His house is on the rock. The most devastating storm arrives

Messenger 1 – your cattle and donkeys have been stolen

Messenger 2 - Fire has burnt your sheep and servants

Messenger 3 – Camels and more servants killed

Messenger 4 - Wind caused your brother's house to collapse and your children are dead

Is there anything left? The storm reveals the foundation. How do we respond? Blame- God, self, others. If I am grafted into the Vine how do I respond? If I am not?

Job 1 vs 20-22 (slide)

²⁰ At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship ²¹ and said:

**“Naked I came from my mother’s womb,
and naked I will depart.**

**The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away;
may the name of the LORD be praised.”**

²² In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing

Ch 2 we see what’s really going on. God counts him worthy. His wife, curse God and die.

When we face massive storms our reality is exposed. I can say without fail that you can tell the foundation of the house by what happens when the storm comes.

R- Massive family issues

B- Faith

E – losing a child

J – cancer

Central Asia

Has your foundation been tested? How have you managed? How has it affected your view of God or ability to live for Christ. You have to get back to what matters. The foundation. Living out the gospel. Doing Christianity. Nothing will come my way that Jesus and me can’t handle together.

Psalm 34 vs 19 (slide)

**The righteous person may have many troubles,
but the LORD delivers him from them all;**

John 16 vs 33 (slide)

In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Conclusion

The call to follow Jesus is a call to a life of Obedience. It's not optional.

John 14 vs 23 (slide)

²³ Jesus replied, "Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them"

Luke 11 vs 28 (slide)

He replied, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it."

So, what will you do with all of this? Is there any movement in you as you come week after week? As you open the word privately and in life group? Are you starting to do what He says?

So, we have laid many choices before you. What do you choose? As for me and my house, we choose Jesus, I choose surrender, I choose the passionate pursuit of Him. It's in my choice of a life of obedience that He takes that and produces the fruit in me. Bottom line:

"You want to know how to take on everything life throws at you and still stand? Do everything that I have just told you." (slide)

Prayer of commitment: Make a choice (slide)

Lord Jesus, Thank you for the sacrifice you made for me on the cross. In giving your life for my sin You did for me what I could not do for myself. I choose to surrender my whole life to you and invite you to be Lord of my life. My desire from this day forward is to live a life of obedience that honors you. Amen