Two Foundations — Delivery Transcript

Matthew 7:24–27 (ESV) · Wes Terry · Sunday, January 26, 2014 · *A Tale of Two*

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So if you'll take your Bible, open it up to the book of Matthew. We're going to be in Matthew chapter 7, and the Sermon on the Mount has been quite a ride, hasn't it? Even this last series we've been in, this four-week series called A Tale of Two, we've looked at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, and Jesus has told us about these sets of two. We've had two gates, two paths, two destinations, two groups of people, two trees, two confessions, and then today we have the two foundations, the foundations on which you build.

You can build on the rock or you can build on the sand. And all throughout the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus has been building this contrast, and he's been contrasting the kingdom with everything that is not the kingdom. It hasn't been the kingdom versus any one particular thing, whether it be Jesus versus religion, though some people would make it that and even some areas of the Sermon on the Mount are kind of like that. It wasn't Jesus pitting the kingdom against... If you want to use a modern-day example, it wasn't Jesus using the kingdom against the Democrats, though there are Facebook groups for that.

It wasn't Jesus and the kingdom against the Republicans, even though there are Facebook groups for that. And it wasn't Jesus against this cause or that cause. What Jesus was doing is he's saying, "Here's my kingdom, and my kingdom is set in contrast against everything that is not my kingdom or everything that is opposed to my kingdom." It's G.K. Chesterton, I think, who said it, or C.S. Lewis. I get them mixed up. I read both of them so much I can't remember who said what. But he said that deciding to choose something is a choice to reject everything that is its opposite, and that's true, isn't it?

If you decide to be married to one woman for life, that means saying no to being married to multiple women at the same time or being involved in a romantic relationship outside your marriage. That's the principle of choice. If you say if you say yes to being married, that means you say no to being a bachelor. If you say yes to one thing, you say no to everything

that is its opposite, and Jesus is saying, "If you're going to say yes to the kingdom, then that means saying no to everything that the kingdom is not.

If you're going to embrace me, you're going to embrace all of me, and if you embrace all of me, that means saying no to everything that I'm opposed to." And it's so common these days, and we saw this in the Sermon on the Mount as Jesus was addressing us at different levels of our life. It's common for people to want Jesus and to want to embrace Jesus and to want to get Jesus on your team to support your cause, but to not want the total package. You just want the parts of Jesus where Jesus lifts up but not where Jesus confronts.

And Jesus is saying through the Sermon on the Mount and with these contrasts, "If you're going to accept the kingdom, then you accept all of the kingdom. And when you accept all of the kingdom, that entails a certain rejection of other things." And part of the things you reject is some of this contrast that Jesus has been setting up, whether that be just behavior modification instead of a true heart change or just playing the games, knowing the scriptures but not letting the scriptures change you. Jesus is setting up this contrast, saying, basically, you can't have a pick-and-choose religion.

And when we were over in India, one of the things that I just couldn't help but notice, and this isn't just India, this is just Hinduism in general—you want to talk about a pick-and-choose religion, that might be one. In, when we went to the Kali temple was down there in downtown Kolkata, India. And for those of you who don't know, Kali is one of the most terrifying Hindu goddesses that there is. She's the god of destruction. She's mostly depicted naked, black, scary. She's got somebody's head in this hand and a sword in the other hand.

And people go to the Kali temple in order to worship Kali because they think if I worship Kali, then she'll keep me from evil. She won't let destruction happen to me because she's the most evil god, so she can withstand all the other evil. But they worship Kali, but even outside the Kali temple, there are all these other gods for you to choose from because worshiping Kali isn't enough. You got to pick and choose some other gods in order to get some other blessings. And so if you wanted financial blessings, you'd have to worship another god, and if you wanted relationship blessings, you would worship another god.

And so literally you would pick and choose from the various different gods in Hinduism. There are millions of gods in Hinduism, but you would pick and choose and put together for you this system of religion so that you could live out your life. And if you picked poorly, that's okay. Upon your next life, when you're reincarnated, you can use better wisdom in the god that you worship and the sincerity with which you worship that god, and better luck next time. And that's just Hinduism. And in Kolkata, India, and as we went there to the Kali temple, it was just explicit.

Just so it's just out there. You can't avoid it. The sense of lostness that you had in India was overwhelming. Everywhere you turned, you saw it and you didn't see any Christian influence. I didn't see any Christian influence. Now that's India. You move over to the States, and even in the American Bible Belt, that idolatry is still present. It's just a little more hidden. We still pick and choose, many of us. There's still this sense in which we define heaven and we define hell. We have a functional heaven, we have a functional hell, and we pick idols, or we worship gods who are going to save us from those hells and take us to those heavens.

And so for many people, what hell is financial instability, and so they pursue their career, they pursue their work in order to reach a certain amount of money because that's what heaven is. Heaven saves them from that hell, and instead of worshiping the true God of the Bible, they worship money. They worship success. For others, it's relationships. There are all kinds of idols that Western people worship, even though it may not be as explicit as India. But it's still a pick-and-choose kind of religion. And what Jesus is saying in the Sermon on the Mount is that if you're going to embrace me, that you embrace all of me, and you reject all of these other idols.

Can't have a pick and choose religion. You can't have the kingdom while having things that are explicitly not the kingdom at the same time. Now when we get to the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, not only is Jesus saying you can't have a pick-and-choose religion, that if you embrace the kingdom, you embrace all the kingdom, today he's also saying you can't have a head-only kind of religion. You can't have a head-only Christianity. Christianity isn't just intellectual. It's about moving from the head to the heart to the feet. It's a matter of having faith and works, that, Sermon on the Mount isn't just to be heard.

It isn't just to be adored. It's about action. It's not just to be commended to others, but that you actually have to have commitment to walk it out, that if you have adoration without action, that it's deadly to your faith. And so Jesus, for over the past four weeks, has been moving us to action. And so let's just read back through the text, verses 13 all the way down to 27, and see how Jesus concludes his sermon. He says, "Enter," verse 13. Chapter 7 verse 13, "Enter by the narrow gate.

For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few. Beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will recognize them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thornbushes, or figs from thistles? So every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.

Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus you will recognize them by their fruits. Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' And I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.' Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it." And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority and not as their scribes.

We've sometimes called these passages the most shocking statements of Jesus, and some of that's just for the shock value. But the other part of that is it really is shocking because what Jesus is saying in these texts, and if you take it in its context, the reason it's so shocking is because Jesus was confronting religious establishment. He was confronting the scribes and the Pharisees. You see it right there at the end. He says he was teaching them as one with authority, not like their scribes and their Pharisees. And so Jesus was looking at the teachings of the religious leaders, and he's saying, "Here's my kingdom, and then there's what these people are teaching.

And what I'm teaching is separate from what they're saying. And if you go along with the religious establishment, if it's just going to be a matter of behavior modification and not letting the scriptures transform your heart. If it's not going to have the humility and the repentance and the surrender to God's will that my kingdom is all about, then that's going to lead you down a road that ends up in destruction." And so he's pointing at the most religious people that all the disciples would have thought of as kingdom people, and he's saying they're not in the kingdom.

They don't get it. And it's shocking. And it should be shocking for us because we're church people. We're religious people, and if Jesus was going to preach this sermon in a context like today, he would preach it at something like the Southern Baptist Convention or something like that. He would preach it around religious people, and so it shocks us. It's a shocking statement from Jesus because on the surface, these disciples and the religious leaders, kingdom people and the religious leaders, there's no real discernible difference. But Jesus is saying, "Past the surface level, if you get underneath that and get to the heart, there's a fundamental contrast.

There's a fundamental difference between kingdom people and people who are not kingdom people." He's contrasting the true believer from the false believer, and what's so troubling is that both lives are characterized by religious activity. Both people go to church. Both people go to the temple. Both people sing the songs. Both sets of people give their tithes. Both sets of people take an offering. But if you get to the very base of those people's fundamental spirituality, then Jesus says there's a deep contrast. And the best way I know how to show you the contrast is to just have us think about the Sermon on the Mount.

I think basically if you just go back to the Beatitudes, the contrast, the difference between kingdom people and non-kingdom people is the difference between pride and humility. Blessed are the poor in spirit. There's a humility that is contrasted with pride. It's a difference between people who are broken over their sin and mourn over their sin, as opposed to people who love their sin and see no need for repentance. It's the difference between people who are surrendered to God and meek, blessed are the meek, those who see God's will as more important than their will and so in humility, they say, "Lord, I surrender to you."

It's the difference between those kind of people and the people who just say, "I'm the master of my own life. I'm going to live my life however I want to. I may be a moral person, I may be a good person, I may go to church, but I haven't surrendered my will to the Lord." That's the contrast. On the surface it may look the same, but underneath it's different. It's the difference between someone who desires God and desires the things that God desires, and someone who just satisfies their own worldly appetites.

It's the difference between a merciful person and a merciless person. It's the difference between someone who's pure in heart, single-minded, and devoted, versus someone who's two-faced, double-minded, and hypocritical. It's the difference between the peacemaker and the troublemaker. The difference between someone who's joyful in persecution and someone who quits under the pressure of being persecuted for their faith. They may look the same on the outside, but underneath, at the level of the heart, there's a difference. And Jesus says in this text there's a difference between the wise person and the foolish person.

And so you all have heard this parable. In fact, most of you in this room could preach this parable better than I could. You have the parable about the person who built his house on the rock and the person who built his house on the sand. And just to explain the parable, the person who builds his house on the rock is the person who hears the teachings of Jesus but doesn't just hear them, but he actually puts them into practice. The rock is the divine revelation of the Word itself. It is Jesus Christ himself.

Jesus is the rock, but I think you take it past that. It's also the words of Christ. You could even say the Scriptures themselves are the rock on which we build our life. But I think if you're going to take it contextually, then what Jesus is saying is that the rock is the words,

it's the teaching of the Sermon on the Mount in particular. And so Jesus is saying if you're going to be a wise person, then you're going to not only hear this sermon that I'm preaching you, the Sermon on the Mount, but you're going to put it into practice in your life.

You're going to apply it. You're going to walk it out. And if you do that then when the storm comes, you'll survive. And of course, the storm, some people look at the storm and say, "Well, that's the sufferings of this life. That's the sufferings of the world." But if you look at it contextually, what the storm is isn't just suffering. The storm is the final judgment. It's the judgment at the end of days when Jesus comes back and we stand before him in judgment, and he judges the wicked from the righteous, those who enter into heaven and those who are banished to hell eternally.

That's the storm of judgment that Jesus is talking about. And you know that's what he's talking about because he said it three times prior to this. Look at verse 17. Or I'm sorry, verse 13. It is the destruction of verse 13. "For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction." That's the final judgment. Look there in the second paragraph, verse 19. "Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." What is that fire? That's the fire of the final judgment.

Verse 21, the place of the... I'm sorry, verse 22—try again—verse 23. "And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'" It's the place of the departed. What is that? That's the final judgment. And so over and over and over again, Jesus is saying, this kingdom perspective, this need for you to hear the Sermon on the Mount, to apply it and live it out in your life, isn't just a tertiary discussion. It's not just a matter of personal taste. There is a judgment that is coming, and if you don't listen to the Word and do the Word, then you won't make it through the final judgment.

Ear service isn't enough. Lip service isn't enough. When Jesus says in the previous paragraph, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter," he's saying you can't just say it. And when Jesus says, "Do the Word, not just hear the Word," he's saying ear service isn't enough. A true faith produces obedience. Saving faith produces activity in the Christian life. If you want to do the will of the Father, look there in verse 21, "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom, but the one who does the will of my Father."

People ask the question, "Well, what does it mean to do the will of the Father?" They're very troubled by this text. But if you want to do the will of the Father, Jesus is telling you in the next paragraph the will of the Father is to obey my teachings. Particularly, I think the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount. And so it's not a game. It's not a light-hearted sermon. It's not a joke. And for many Western Christians, I think maybe we're desensitized to the seriousness of Jesus' teaching here. And when you get into a place like India, and when you see Christians who embrace the gospel in India who have to count the cost, and they lose their family, and they lose their social status, and they're ostracized by the

community, but they willingly embrace that because, I get the kingdom, and not only do I get the kingdom, but I fear the judgment of Christ more than I fear the judgment of my community and my family.

They get it. Jesus is saying, "If you're going to have faith, true saving faith, then you not only hear the Word, but you do the Word." Now, I want to make a few qualifications. Everyone's building a house. You notice Jesus uses the word everyone over and over again. He uses it in verse 24. He uses it again in verse 26. He's showing the universality of the truth, that everybody has a spirituality. There are no atheists, basically. Even atheists have faith commitments. Everyone's building a house, and everyone's going to experience judgment, and everyone will stand before Jesus and give an account.

But some people would look at a text like that and say, "Well, is Jesus teaching a kind of a works-based salvation? Is it your good works that makes you saved?" And I don't think you can get that from this text for a couple of different reasons. The first one is that if you're going to apply the teachings of the Sermon on the Mount, the Sermon on the Mount itself will not teach works-based righteousness. The Sermon on the Mount, if you go back to the Beatitudes, the very beginning point of the Sermon on the Mount isn't work your way to heaven.

The beginning of the Sermon on the Mount is, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Blessed are the ones who realize their spiritual bankruptcy, who know they can't get into heaven, who know that they need to plead for God's mercy in order to enter into the kingdom. It's not those who think they can get there by being good enough. It's those who know they can't get there because they're wicked and they need mercy. So just the teaching of Jesus itself excludes this kind of idea that you work your way to heaven.

The other thing is that if it's true you get into heaven through your works, then it's true that you could probably lose your salvation if you're not working hard enough, and Jesus teaches against that in the previous paragraph when he says, "Many are going to say to me, 'Lord, Lord, didn't we do this, that, and the other in your name?' And I will declare to them, 'I never knew you.'" He doesn't say, "I used to know you and we grew apart." He doesn't say, "You were saved, but you fell from grace."

He says, "You never had it. You never had the kingdom truth. I never knew you." And so he's not teaching a works-based righteousness. He's teaching the Sermon on the Mount, and the Sermon on the Mount says there's a sense in which when you realize your spiritual bankruptcy, you're broken over that sin, and you surrender yourself to the will of the Father, and you begin to desire the righteousness that only he can give, something transformative happens in your heart, and that transformative grace in your life produces obedience in your life. It produces a desire to do the will of the Father, which is to obey the teachings of Jesus.

And if your faith doesn't produce in you that kind of activity, then there's something wrong with your faith. And the wrongness of the faith is at the level of the heart, not at the level of the activity. You can still go to church. You can tithe. You can do all of those activities, but if there isn't something changed at the level of the heart, then there's something wrong at the heart. The fruit leads to the root. Some of the behaviors may look similar. The houses in this parable looked very similar from the outside, but if you get down to the foundations, then there's a deep contrast.

And I... The best way I know how to put the contrast is to just go back to the Beatitudes. The Beatitudes give you the summary of the Sermon on the Mount. The foundation point of Christianity is this: the first four Beatitudes, where you're poor in spirit, you're broken over sin, you're meek, you're surrendered to the will of the Father, and you hunger and thirst after righteousness. Now when we first went to India, before we went to Titagarh and before we went to the schools to try and find the people groups, we went to the villages to meet Finny's pastors.

Finny—many of you know Finny Mathews because he's preached here before. Others of you have adopted orphans or sponsored children in the Alpha International Ministries so that they can go to school and make it. But one of the most important things that Finny's organization does is that they train national church planters to plant churches all over India. And as we went to the villages, we met with about 40 of those church planters in a little bitty school. School—it was a room with a single light, maybe two lights. 40 men are packed in there, and Finny wanted us to train his pastors.

Now some of these men, you know, traveled five, six, eight hours on foot. Some of them came over by boat. They were pastoring on little islands across the coast there. They came all the way just to listen to Clyde and Wes. Couldn't believe it. Talk about pressure. And when you are going to train pastors or teach leadership, that's a challenge in and of itself. But when you're going to train pastors and teach leadership through a translator, then you really have to simplify it. Really got to make it cross-cultural, very simple.

And so we were trying to think of ways in order to communicate the simplicity of the gospel, the simplicity of Christianity and do it with these church planters who really... You think of a church planter, you think of a seminary-trained theologian. These are not seminary-trained people. These are people many times who had just gotten saved, just gotten baptized. God had put a call in their life to preach and here they are. They don't know much about the Bible other than that they love Jesus, they want to serve Jesus, and they want to learn as much as they can and so they're hungry for the truth of the gospel.

And so when I was talking with Clyde about kind of how we train these pastors, he said something about the Christian life that I thought was so simple and yet so good that I had to share it with you guys, just like I had to share it with the pastors there. And I think in the

notes I call it the Christian secret. But as soon as Clyde said it, I thought immediately of the Sermon on the Mount. I thought immediately of the Beatitudes, and this, I think, encapsulates the Christian life.

And for many of us in this room, you would wholeheartedly agree with that because you've been living the Christian life long enough that you know these three things have to be in place, and if these three things aren't in place, then there's something wrong with your spirituality. And it starts with this idea that the Christian life is lived by faith. You live the Christian life by faith. Amen. Everybody agrees with that. The Christian life is lived by faith. But faith isn't just merely intellectual. Faith isn't just a belief in something, that biblical faith is—if you go through the New Testament and you look at what saving faith is, it's not just intellectual, that it actually produces more than that.

It's more than just knowledge, and that's what Jesus is saying in the Sermon on the Mount. It's more than just hearing it. It's about doing it. And so Clyde, he put forward three words that I think really encapsulate the Christian life, and the three words are surrender, trust, and obey. Surrender, trust, and obey. Surrender is the beginning of faith. Trust is the proving of faith. And obedience is the act of faith. Surrender, trust, and obey. And as soon as Clyde said that, I thought immediately of the Beatitudes because in the Beatitudes you have those three things almost in sequential order, don't you?

You have surrender. The Beatitudes, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom..." Let's just read it together. You know, we can have church. There's not many people here. Matthew 5:3, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth." See, those three things, poor in spirit, those who mourn, those who are meek, all of those communicate surrender. You surrender if you know that you're in a war and you can't win.

That's what it means to be poor in spirit. I know that I'm at war with God. I know that I'm wicked. I know that I'm a sinner. I know that I can't get into heaven, that there's no reason in and of myself that I ought to be welcomed into God's presence. And so realizing that, I realize my spiritual bankruptcy. I'm poor in spirit. That's what it means to surrender. I see my sin. I'm broken over my sin. You're saying, "God, I give up. I see my inadequacy." And then in meekness, the negative side of meekness is surrender.

You surrender your own right. You surrender the way you think your life should go. You surrender the way... You basically take all of your talents, skills, and abilities and say, "Lord, I'm entrusting these to you." It's not weakness. Meekness isn't weakness. It's power under the control of your heavenly Father. You're surrendering. But you're also trusting when you're meek, aren't you? You're trusting that what God wants to do with your life is better

than what you want to do with your life, that what God wants to do with your skills, talents, and abilities is better than what you might do with your skills, talents, and abilities.

And so you're trusting. This is the proving of your faith. You're saying, "God, I trust you," in meekness. Then he says in the fourth Beatitude, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied." That's what it means to trust. "Blessed are the pure in heart." The pure in heart are, remember, the single-minded, those who are devoted. How do you know what you trust? There are what you might call trust tests, a faith test. How do you know what you trust? You know the way you can figure out who it is that you're trusting in or what it is that you're trusting in?

If you would just answer the question: where is it that I go to for sweetness in life? Where is it that I go to for satisfaction? Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, they will be satisfied. And so what is it that you go to for sweetness? What is it in your life that you put your roots down in for security, that if this one thing was absent, you would just utterly blow away? Your answer to that question is who you trust. It's what you trust, and for some it's a relationship, some it's a person, some it's finances, some it's maybe a substance.

For others, I mean, it could be anything. But Jesus is saying if you're going to be in the kingdom, then you trust your heavenly Father, and one of the ways you know you're trusting God is that you're desiring him more than you desire anything else. That when you satisfy your appetites for the sweetness in life and your security in life, you're satisfying it in God, His kingdom, His righteousness. You're pure in heart, you're single-minded, you're devoted. It means you're not a hypocrite, that you're not double-minded, that you're not trusting in God and in something else.

You're not trusting in Jesus and in your stock portfolio, that you're pure in heart. That's what it means to trust. And if the surrender is there and if the trust is there, then that produces obedience. Surrender, trust, and obey. And the remaining three Beatitudes are all about action. Mercy giving, peacemaking, joy in persecution. What is that? That's obedience. And so when the foundations are in place, Jesus is saying it produces a life of obedience to the Lord. Surrender, trust, and obey. The beginning, the proving, and the acting of faith. And it's almost fitting, you know, to get to the end of the Sermon on the Mount.

The end takes us back to the beginning, the foundation of our spirituality. Surrender, trust, and obey. The Christian life is lived by faith from beginning to end. The faith that saves you is the faith that sanctifies you is the faith that glorifies you. The Christian life is a continual process of surrendering, trusting, and obeying. And when you get saved, you don't become perfect overnight. Hallelujah. Amen. When I got saved, I didn't become perfect overnight. But the moment you get saved, something transforms, something transformative happens in your heart and you begin to have a heart that desires Jesus.

So you're not perfected, but the moment you become a Christian is the moment that you begin to pursue a life of perfection. Because there's something different in here. Something has changed. And what Jesus is addressing, he's addressing lifestyle change. When he says, build your house on the rock, those are present tense verbs. He's talking about a lifestyle. He's not saying if you've sinned once, then that's an indicator that you're not in the kingdom. He's talking about lifestyle change. It was the tree that never produced good fruit that was thrown into the fire, and so it's not as though a one-time lapse of sin in your life should make you question your salvation.

But what Jesus is saying, if your life is not characterized as a whole by surrendering, trusting, and obeying, if it's not characterized as a whole by faith and repentance, then there's something off, and that something is off at the level of the foundation, at the level of the heart. And it's not a joking matter. It's life or death. For those who build their house on the rock, for those who have a lifestyle characterized by surrendering, trusting, and obeying, they'll survive the storm of judgment. Because when judgment comes, they'll say, "Lord, I knew I was poor in spirit.

I knew I couldn't get into heaven on my own. I saw my sin. I was broken over my sin. I surrendered to you. I wanted the things you wanted. I desired the things you desired. And I didn't live a perfect life, but I pursued the life of perfection that you laid out for me." And when the judgment comes, they'll be saved. Now, 1 Corinthians 3 says some of them will barely be saved. Some of them you... What do they say? You still smell the smoke on them when they get to heaven.

You build on the foundation, which is Christ, but you build with wood, hay, and stubble, and it just gets burned up in the fire of judgment. But hey, you're in. But there will be others who don't build on the rock, and the judgment will come. And Jesus will say to them, "I never knew you." There's a painting in Lübeck, Germany, called the Lament of Jesus Christ against the Ungrateful World. And it reads, "You call me master and obey me not. You call me light and see me not. You call me the way and walk me not.

You call me the life and live me not. You call me wise and follow me not. You call me fair and love me not. You call me rich and ask me not. You call me eternal and seek me not. And if I condemn thee, blame me not." There it is, Luke 6:46: "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and you do not do what I say?" Faith, true biblical faith produces obedience. Faith, not only do we hear the Word, but we do the Word. It's faith and works. Not a works-based salvation.

No, that's not what the Sermon on the Mount teaches. But the Sermon on the Mount is warning us that if your Christian life isn't characterized by surrender, trust, and obey, then there's something wrong at the level of the foundations. And so what is it that Jesus is calling us to do? Well, I think a real practical application, and this is something that I just wrote

down: from now on every sermon that I hear and probably every sermon that I preach should be asking this question anyway: What is it that Jesus wants me to do?

As you listen to teaching—the way I listen to sermons, and this is bad, I shouldn't say this but I'm almost listening with a critical ear. I'm always trying to pick up stylistic things and this or that or the other, and maybe critical here and positive there. But instead of doing that when people preach the Word, what happens is that Christ comes and He incarnates Himself. He joins with the people. And so today, as we opened up the Scriptures, as we looked at the Bible, Jesus Christ Himself incarnated Himself. He became real.

He confronted us in different ways. And so when that happens, you ask yourself the question: What is it that I need to do? Listen to sermons asking the question: What is it that I need to do? The other thing I think this text solicits from us is for us to ask the question: On what foundation am I building? Am I building on the rock? Or have I built my whole religious life on something other than the rock? Has it just been a matter of show? Has it just… You know, my sister got saved, and so that's what I wanted to do.

I… It was a matter of what people thought of me. It's never penetrated my heart. I've never surrendered. I've never actually trusted in Christ. I've always been trusting these other things, whether it been my attendance or my tithe record or what people thought of me. I've trusted in everything other, everyone other than Jesus alone and in God alone. And if that's you this morning, what Jesus is saying is build on the rock. Embrace Christ. Trust Christ. Put your faith in Him. And then lastly, maybe for most of us in this room, you've been seasoned Christians and you would wholeheartedly say, "My life has been characterized by surrendering, trusting, and obeying."

I think maybe for us this morning as a group like this we might commit ourselves to prayer. Because in India, the lostness was just overwhelming and explicit. Everywhere you turned, it was just awesome. Not awesome like good, I mean awesome like overwhelming, awestruck, awesome. Heartbreaking. Visible lostness everywhere you look. In Titagarh, there was not one single church, not one… Not even a mosque, not even a monotheistic religion, nothing. Idolatry rampant everywhere. Visible lostness breaks your heart. But I think in the Bible Belt, the lostness is still there, it's just harder to see.

The idolatry is still there, but it's just harder to see. The behavior looks the same. Everyone's going to church. Everyone is a Christian. You talk to anybody, you knock on their door, "Do you have a church home?" "Well, not really but I believe in Jesus." But are they really building their life on the rock? And if what Jesus says to the religious leaders is any indication of what he might say to us today, then he would say, "Most people who think they're religious, they don't really know me." And so for us as a church of truly committed followers of Jesus, people who are building their life on the rock and who know the joy of the kingdom as a result, maybe we commit ourselves to prayer.

We have a small sampling of our church here today, but there may be many in our fellowship who don't get it, who don't know, who haven't built on the rock, and they exist in a climate, a Bible Belt America, where to say that I didn't get it or that I'm not in or that I haven't trusted in Jesus is so embarrassing that the pain of embarrassment keeps them from truly trusting Christ. The fact that what people think of me is so overwhelming and so overbearing in their life that they would rather put their trust in what people think of them instead of putting their trust in Jesus, and so we can pray.

Pray for them daily. Pray that the kingdom would come in this church and in this city and as we through this church bring the kingdom all throughout the world, even in a place like India. Pray for those people. So I don't know what the Lord's calling you to this morning, but let's just take a few minutes in prayer. This is a small setting, so I want to invite you to come and pray at the altar if you would like to do that. You can pray for your church. Maybe you have someone in your family who you'd like to pray for this morning.

If you'd like to pray with me, I'll certainly be here. But I want to ask Mary to come and play softly.

[Recording ends.]