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Teaching: Carlon Tschetter
Series: The Sermon on the Mount
Message: An Indestructible Life

Transcribed Message
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Matthew 7:24-29

This weekend I'm going to be watching golf as the PGA unfolds. Football is coming so I'll probably be watching some football. If I'm not watching a live sporting event, I'm probably watching HGTV and one of those home renovation shows where they flip a home or they just go in and renovate it. It's just fascinating to watch that. One of my favorite shows is the *Property Brothers*. Jonathan and Drew. I came across a story recently where they told about the fact that they have done 320 episodes of the show. In 320 episodes, they have only canceled on one person in terms of the project to redo a home. They told a little bit about what happened in this article. This was all going just great like it always does and then they got to the point where the guy was going to buy a home. This particular guy insisted that he buy a home in what had previously been an area that was landfill. The sad thing was that as the builders came into this area, they didn't know soil treatment. There were no extra things that were done and most of the homes of this development were literally sinking into the ground. But this guy was determined to buy this home. When they walked into the home, they realized that the house was literally falling apart around them. Different heights in the ceilings. The guy just continued to insist that this was the home he was wanting to buy. In addition to wanting to skirt corners, he wanted to just to do it on the cheap and get it as quickly as he could. Jonathan and Drew finally got to the point where they said we can't do this. This is illegal. You can't not go by code. We're walking away. This was the only time that they've ever done that, which was pretty remarkable when you think about what we know about foundations, what we know about the importance of structure.

I have to tell you when I read that article I couldn't help but think of Matthew 7 and verse 24 and these verses that unfold before us this morning. Let me read those as you look at Matthew 7: "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."

What I see in this last set of verses on the Sermon on the Mount is building your life on the sure foundation of the Word of God will make all the difference in the world in this life and in the life to come. God has given us His Word so that we will hear it and so that we will do it. Here we are almost one year after we started off this fall series a year ago called people of the book. That should be exactly where we find ourselves. If we are people of the book, it should be that everything in this book is what we want in our life. That's the way Jesus brings this whole sermon to a conclusion, basically saying are you people of the book? Are you not just hearing it but are you doing it?

Let's take a final look back. We said kingdom living is living life the way Jesus did. We have this incredible example before us. We don't need to go around wearing a wristband saying what would Jesus do? We could go around I think better wearing a wrist band that said what Jesus did. This is what He did. This is His life. This is Him showing to us how to live life well. We have this incredible example.

Secondly, kingdom living is impossible apart from God's enabling grace. We have a picture in Matthew 5,6, 7 of total dependency upon God. The Sermon on the Mount is absolutely devastating to anybody who's reading it with understanding. It is absolutely devastating to anybody who's thinking that they're going to work their way to heaven. It is absolutely devastating to anybody who thinks religion is the way to God. What Jesus demands of us chapter after chapter in this sermon is impossible for us to do. It drives us back to the reality that here is an example of how to live life the way Jesus did. Oh, by the way, you can't do that on your own. You can only do that if you're in full dependency on the Holy Spirit of God.

Then lastly, kingdom living is God's plan to make the gospel known. So here in these chapters we are called to live on mission. I don't know if you got the word but

Caitlin has been posting every day this month on all of the social media platforms. She's been posting different examples of life on mission going on at Covenant. It's fun to read, and so I hope you jump in on that as the rest of the month goes because that's what this is. Kingdom living is living on mission out there in the places that God has put us. That's what God has called us to do, to be salt and light, to be people who are bringing influence into the world in which God has placed us.

So we come to the final story. Sadly, we come to the final story. It is a familiar one. If you're of a certain age, you may have sung in children's Sunday school back in the day a song about this. You might remember that. The wise man built his house upon the rock. I won't sing it, but it was a song that really reflected this little story. What we want to see is first of all the similarities in the story. The similarities and there are three of them. Jesus tells us the final story and there are three things that are the same.

The first one is that there are two builders in this story. Two builders. We're not told any more about these two builders than that. We're not told that one of them has a great reputation and everybody wants him to build a house for them. We're not told that the other guy was somebody who cut the corners and the cost to get it done as quickly as he could. We don't know anything more about this set of builders than what Jesus tells us. There are two builders.

They both wanted a house. They both wanted the protection that a house provided and afforded. Jesus said in verse 24 and verse 26 that both of the builders listened. Both of the builders listened to what was said. Another one of my favorite shows about houses is on PBS, *This Old House*. Very often in that unfolding of this show, they'll bring in an expert. They're facing some unique challenge or maybe they're just wanting somebody to come in and explain something about a plumbing, electrical, roofing issue. They bring in somebody that's an expert and he brings everybody up to speed on what needs to be done. Jesus tells us both of these builders are wanting to build. Both of them listened to the master builder. Both of them listened to what was being said.

Now notice the second similarity. They both build a house. So we have two houses. Again, it's not like one guy heard and then he went out to build a house and then another guy heard but he didn't go out to build a house. They both went and they

built a house. I want to suggest that they both built in the same neighborhood. We're going to see why in a minute. I think they built in the same neighborhood and I think as you would have seen these homes, they would've been strikingly similar in terms of your appreciation of what you looked at and what you saw. I think they would've been comparable. Curb appeal. Nice landscaping. Good quality windows. Stonework and brick work set it off. 40-year hail resistant shingles. All of those things you want to get. As you saw those two houses, they were very similar.

Here's what Jesus wants us to see. We're all builders. We're all builders. There's two builders in the story. Both of them build a house. The commonality that we are to see is that you and I are builders. We're building a house. That house, in this case, is a life. It's a legacy. You're building a life. You're building a legacy. People are going to remember something about you. that's what Jesus is talking about here. This building that is going on. Step by step, brick by brick, choice by choice, act by act, word by word, minute by minute, hour by hour, day by day, year by year. We're building something. We're building a life. We're building a legacy.

Then the last of the similarities. There's one storm. There's one storm in this story. In almost exactly the same language. In fact, the description that Jesus gives us of this storm in both cases is so close to being exact that there is just one minor word difference that doesn't affect the impact of what Jesus is saying. That's why I say to you that the similarity is that these guys built in the same neighborhood because there is one storm. The issue that we're going to be dealing with is not an issue of location. I know the three rules of real estate – location, location, location. Well, in this case, the outcome that we're going to look at in this story doesn't have anything to do with location. They're both built in the same neighborhood. It has nothing to do with the storm. It is the same storm that hits them both. Jesus makes no distinction. It is not like a hurricane hits this house over here and then this guy is just dealing with an Oklahoma thunderstorm. No, it's the same storm that comes to both. The point that Jesus makes is there is building going on. All of us are building and all of us are going to encounter storms.

The third thing that Jesus would have us see. This is not a story. This isn't a parable. This isn't an account of how to avoid storms. There's nothing in this lesson this

morning that is to say to you that you need to find a way to avoid storms. Because you can't avoid the storms. That's the whole point of the story. This isn't do you have a safe room or not. This is the reality that storms come into our life and all of us face the storms of life in one way or another. So how you build your house is the front and center of the story. How you build your life is what Jesus is zeroing in on here.

What is your legacy? What is it that people are going to remember about you when they look back and they see the house that you have been building day by day, week by week, and year by year? My friend, I say to you that the whole point of this story is you're building. I'm building. There's a storm that's coming or maybe you're in the storm right now. The storms of life are there. Sometimes those storms are intensely personal. Sometimes maybe you and God are the only ones who know. Maybe sometimes it's you, God and a few family members or a few friends. Maybe that storm that you're dealing with has something to do with physical health. All of us know people who are grappling with some incredibly challenging physical issues. Maybe your storm has something to do with work, your job. Maybe your storm has to do with finances. Sometimes these things all wrap up into one. Maybe your storm is a relational one. Maybe you're in a significant falling out with somebody really important in your life. There's a relational storm. Maybe your storm has to do with where your marriage is right now. It might be something related to your children. Just think through. The point of the story is we're builders and we're building a house. We're building a legacy. We're building a life. There's a storm. We have three similarities.

Now I want you to see that as Jesus unwraps the rest of the story, He brings us to the differences. The differences in this story and there are four of them. As we read that, you remember that the first one was that one acted on what he heard and one didn't. so let's go back and look again at 24: "Everyone then who hears these words of Mine and does them..." Verse 26. We have the opposite of that. We have the difference. "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not do them..." Again, both builders heard but only one builder believed and acted on it. It's like the guy that comes into *This Old House* and he lays out a solution to the problem and the guys on the crew hear it but they don't do it. They do something opposite of it. They ignore it. The very solution was there. Jesus says the difference here is that somebody is hearing

what I say and doing it, and somebody's hearing it and not doing it. It's the same thing that Jesus says in John 14. This is not a new theme in Jesus's teaching. Jesus says in John 14:21 whoever has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me. We're people of the book. This is what we're supposed to do. This is how He's told us to live. We're either doing it or we're not doing it. It says in verse 23 Jesus answered and if anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. The difference is that one is hearing and doing, and one is hearing and not doing.

Martin Luther captures the essence of it when he said: "Doctrine is good and is a precious thing, but it is not being preached for the sake of being heard but for the sake of action and its application to life." It's not enough to hear. It's not enough to enjoy. It's not enough to simply appreciate. It's not enough to admire God's Word. It is not enough to sit here week after week and nod in agreement to what somebody might be saying. Hearing is absolutely vital and essential in this story, but hearing by itself is not enough. The outcome and the difference in the outcome of this story is not a matter of somebody hearing and somebody not hearing. The difference is somebody hearing and somebody doing.

Now notice the second thing that we see by way of difference. One person in the story is described as being a wise person and one is described as being a fool. We can stop right here and we could say this is like reading out of the book of Proverbs. Believe me, Jesus is the personification of the book of Proverbs. When you read the book of Proverbs and you're reading about the wise and the fool, you see that wisdom is portrayed as being a person. Personification is a figure of speech and language in which something inanimate is made to come alive. Jesus is the personification of wisdom in the book of Proverbs. Do you know what you're reading in the book of Proverbs? You're reading how to live life the way Jesus did. You're reading how the wisest man who ever lived on the earth lived His life. It comes alive in the life of Christ. It is pretty easy to see as you read through the Sermon on the Mount corollaries between this sermon and the book of Proverbs. That's what Jesus is doing here. He brings that to us in that way specifically for that reason. If we're following the story at all, we know how this is going to unfold. The wise person is one who hears and obeys. The foolish person is the one who hears but doesn't act.

Understand at this point in the story, everything seems equal. We have two houses. You drive by and they both look attractive. If you are home buying, you could put both of them on your comp list and say I want to compare these two houses. They look very similar in appearance. The storm has not yet come. Outwardly, they look very much the same. Everything seems to be okay. Here's the point. Outwardly, a wise person and a foolish person can be attending the same church. A wise person and a foolish person can be sitting in the same section of the church. They could be sitting in Covenant south, Covenant north, Covenant midtown. Wise people and foolish people from the outside are strikingly similar in appearance. It's just that the storm hasn't come. They sit together Sunday after Sunday, oftentimes in the same community group or small group Bible studies. Their kids play together back in the nursery. They interact together. But what's the difference?

That is the third thing that comes to us and that is that one builds his house on a rock and one builds on sand. In Luke's account of this story, Luke says that the wise person, the wise builder dug deep to put his foundation down. He dug deep, Luke says. Just giving us a little more information than Matthew does but it underscores the fact that he worked hard. He realized that this was vitally important to his life, to his legacy, to his house. The foundation that he builds on.

What is the foundation that the wise person is building on? Jesus tells us in verse 24 – “Everyone who hears these words of Mine...” I take it that what Jesus is pointing us to, if we stay just in the immediate context, we would say it's the Sermon on the Mount. He's just wrapping up an extended sermon. He says these words of mine are what you are to be building your life on, to be the foundation underneath your home, underneath your life. They're to be the bedrock that you build on. That's what the wise person does. These words of Jesus.

Matthew 16. You remember Matthew 16 when Jesus was having that interaction with the disciples. He asked what are people saying about me? Who do people think I am? Some people think you're Elijah and some people think you're John the Baptist come back and raised from the dead. Some people think you're Jeremiah or one of the other prophets. Remember then Jesus zeroed in and said okay, but who do you think I am? It was Peter who stepped forward and said we know you are. You are the Christ,

the Son of the living God. What did Jesus say at that point? He said Peter. Petros. Pebble. Rock. That didn't come from your mind. That's not something that you thought up on your own. That comes from the Father. That is the Word of God to you. It is on this rock which is the Word of God, the rock which is the truth of God, the rock which is the cornerstone of Christ. That's what a wise person builds on. A wise person builds their life on the Word of God.

1 Corinthians 3:11 says that we can't lay any other foundation than that which has been laid which is Christ Jesus. So if you broaden this out to the fullest scope, we would say a wise person is building their life on the Word of God. They're building their lives on the person of Christ. They're building their life on the gospel that God has given to us, His Son.

Then we have the fool and what is the fool building on? The fool builds on sand. It's faster and quicker. You don't have to dig deep. You don't have to excavate. No doubt, if these guys were building within a close proximity of each other's home, the guy who is the wise man digging down to the rock is realizing this is hard work. This is taking a lot longer. He looks over and there is his neighbor. His house is halfway up. It's easy. It's simple. It's effortless. The fool builds on the sand of human viewpoint. He builds on the sand of human philosophy and human wisdom. He builds on whatever is popular or trendy. His counselors give human viewpoint. He is, she is very much on the wide road. The wide road that leads to destruction. They hear the Word but they follow the world. They hear the Word but they don't do it.

This brings us to the final of the differences. One house stands and one house collapses. By the way, look at that wording in verse 27: "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." In the Greek text, the word "great" is in the emphatic position. Jesus wants us to visually picture the total and utter collapse of the home, of that house. We've all seen those videos on the news or YouTube where there's a home on the side of the hill, by a river, in a flood area. A storm is there and you see this house under the full assault of the storm. You see it begin to shudder and shake and literally you can watch homes just collapse. They're just devastated by the storm. It's a complete disaster, a complete wipe out.

Notice again, that the elements of the storm are exactly the same. The ferocity is the same. The wise man couldn't avoid the storm any more than the foolish man. That's not the point of the story. This certainly undercuts the idea that God's intention for us is to live with prosperity, health, wealth. The best life that we could possibly ever have is right here and right now. That is not what the Bible teaches. The Bible teaches that the wise man and the foolish man are both going to encounter the same ferocious storm. This isn't a matter of finding a place for our family to be safe from all the storms of life. It's not a matter of protecting ourselves from all of the storms that are in the world. This is a matter of how you prepare for the storms that are going to come. This is a matter of how do I get through the storm that comes into my life.

Proverbs chapter 10 and verse 25. This is what I'm talking about. The wisdom of Proverbs and the Sermon on the Mount. "When the tempest passes, the wicked is no more, but the righteous is established forever." What an incredible word from the wisdom of Proverbs. The tempest passes. The wicked's place has collapsed. There's nothing there. But the righteous is established forever. This is a sober word. This is a word of warning. This is telling us that a calamity awaits the person who lives life like a fool. But this also is a great word of encouragement to those who are building their life on the Word of God, on the foundation that is Christ and the truth of the gospel.

Listen to Paul's testimony about this. What did Paul say that was true of his life? In 2 Corinthians chapter 4 Paul says this: "So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen what to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal." It is the very song we sang in part this morning. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus's blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame but wholly lean on Jesus's name. When darkness veils His lovely face (as it seems in the midst of the storm, right?) I rest on His unchanging grace. In every high and stormy gale, my anchor holds within the veil. His oath, His covenant, His blood support me in the overwhelming flood when all around my soul gives way. He then is all my hope and stay.

I want to come back to this, but I want you to see verses 28 and 29. Then we're going to come back to the application. Look at how this whole thing wraps up. "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." This is such a cool way that this sermon ends with this commentary by Matthew. As he looks at the audience, he just sees that there's this sense of astonishment as Jesus brings the final story and drives home the truth of the two builders. I think they're astonished and amazed first of all by the content. This is a revelation of Jesus the Messiah all through the Sermon on the Mount. This is Jesus showing us what it is that pleases God, what kind of life that pleases God. The content that amazed them, they never heard anything like this before.

Then, of course, there was the manner in which He taught it because nobody taught the way Jesus did. It's amazing how many times you can go through the Gospels and pull up a verse that says something very similar to this. That when Jesus taught, people were just amazed at what they heard, both in terms of the content and the manner in which He taught. Because He taught, we read, as one who had authority not as the other teachers of the day. Jesus never said thus saith the Lord. Jesus said truly, truly I say to you. It was a claim, if you will, that He was the Son of God.

Let's come back. What do we take away from this last story? What do we take away from this final section of the Sermon on the Mount? I just want to put before you two questions. Two simple questions and one will answer the other. The first one is: what foundation are you building your life on? My friend, you're a builder. You're building something. At the end of your life, people are going to reflect on your life. They're going to reflect on your legacy. They're going to talk about and think about what they saw in your life. The question before all of us is what is the foundation we're building on? Is it the philosophies of the world, the thinking of the world, the trendy stuff of the world? Or is it the Word of God, the Word of Christ, the person of Christ, the gospel of His grace?

I think the answer to that question is in the second question. What is your response to the Word of God? Both of the builders heard it. Both of them were in church on Sunday morning. They sat under the teaching of the Word of God. They listened to

what Jesus said. On that level, there wasn't any difference between the wise and the fool. They were both sitting there with their Bible opened, their iPad opened, their phone to the passage, their pen in hand taking down a note. They're both on the outside looking very much the same. But what is your response in your heart to the Word of God? Is it like Jeremiah chapter 15 verse 16: "Thy words were found and I did eat them and they were a delight to my soul because I am called by Your name, O Lord God Most High." Your word was found and I delighted in it. I marveled at the wonder of it. Are you like the psalmist in Psalm 119 who finally after 176 verses put down the pen and exclaimed 176 different ways how much he loved the Word of God? If that's true, then you're building on the rock. Your legacy is going to be great. Your life is going to have impact and influence for the gospel and for Christ. That's the choice of the wise.

The foolish however? Not so much. Little regard. Little interest. They hear it but they're like what James said. They look into the mirror. They see a disheveled face and disheveled hair and they smile and they walk away. The Word is heard but it's never done. People, we are to be people of the book. This is God's will for your life. Right here. There is no question that you will encounter about how to live life well that God doesn't answer right here in some way, shape or form. So you're either building a life and a legacy on the rock or you're building a life and legacy on sand. Time will tell because the storm is going to come and that storm is going to test the foundation of your life. It's either going to hold fast and firm, or it's going to wash away and your life will reflect that. What we do with the Word of God makes all the difference in the world in this life and the life to come.

This story, my friend, has implications for both those who have believed and those who have not. Let's not confuse the issue here. If you have never put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ as your Savior, if you're trusting in your own human efforts and your own righteousness and you think you're working your way to heaven, the Bible simply and plainly says that you building your life on sand. Your life is going to be judged accordingly and Jesus will say to you I never knew you. If, in fact, you're building your life on the rock, which is the Word of God, there's still a word here for us, and that word is even at that point as a believer in Christ we face jeopardy. Not the loss of salvation, which is secure in Christ forever, but we face the potential of a life that is

evaluated and judged at the Bema seat of Christ. 1 Corinthians 3 – you can read all about it. Paul says somebody's life is going to be consumed in a flame of fire and all that they thought they had to offer God goes up in smoke. Paul says they're saved yet as by fire.

But there are going to be those who build on the Word of God, who marvel at the wonder of God's Word, who receive it and live it though imperfectly, they do so with passion and zeal. God says their life, their legacy, their story is going to be like gold, silver and precious stone. To that one, Jesus promises to say well done, thou good and faithful servant. I want to be one like that. I want to be a person of the book. I want to be somebody who lives out the life of Christ as best I can in dependence on the Holy Spirit of God, surrounded by encouragement from other believers who want to do the same thing. All for the glory of God. All for the purpose and intent of being an influence in this community and all of the places that God takes us.

Let's pray. Father God, we have been with these early people who first heard this sermon. We have been nothing short of amazed ourselves and astonished at the wonder and the truth of what Jesus has taught us. Lord, this is an amazing sequence of passages filled with eternal truth, filled with things that we can build our life on forever and know that when the storms come, and they do and they will and they are, we are built on a rock and a firm foundation. Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we thank You for all of this, for this amazing and wonderful provision of the Savior who has delivered us from ourselves and from sin, and has promised us the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord, in whose name we pray, Amen.