

Astonished prt 20

Matthew 7:24–27

MPS: **Only a life built on Christ will stand the test of time.**

PRAYER TIME:

Vs 1-2 Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD, O my soul! 2 I will praise the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being

The Psalmist is praising the Lord and proclaiming that he will do this for the rest of his life. As God's people, we too should praise the Lord from now until He calls us home.

When you see LORD in all capital letters in Scripture, it is refereeing to God's name, Yahweh, which means I AM.

HE IS WORTHY!

LORD, I praise you because you are _____

Vs 5-6 Blessed is he whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the LORD his God, 6 who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, who keeps faith forever;

WE ARE NEEDY!

God, I need your help in my life with _____

(Relationships, finances, work, marriage, parenting, extended family, church, direction, wisdom, problem solving, health)

God, we need you to revive our hearts through your presence in worship and prayer tonight.

Psalm 146:2 (ESV) *2 I will praise the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being.*

INTRO:

- Review of Kingdom of God – already but not yet – Jesus is bringing both together in his closing illustration we know as a parable – a little story with a big meaning.

OPEN:

- On June 27, 2009, in Shanghai, China, a 13-story apartment building stood tall and nearly complete. Windows in, tiles on — it looked ready for families to move in. But at 5:37 in the morning, with almost no warning, the entire building toppled sideways and crashed to the ground in one piece. (SHOW PICTURES)
- Why? Not an earthquake. Not a bomb. The problem was underneath.
- The problem was in the site work.
- “Site work” is all the preparation and earth-moving that happens at a construction site before the visible building goes up — digging, grading, soil removal, and foundation work that most people never see.
- The construction crews made a critical mistake in the site work. They dug a deep hole on one side for a parking garage, then piled all that dirt high on the other side of the building. Then — the rains came. The soft, unstable soil underneath gave way, the foundation piles snapped, and the whole building toppled over. And great was its fall.
- Jesus is calling us to do some site work in our hearts this morning. He wants us to dig down deep and examine the foundation we’re building on — because when the rains come, only a life built on Him will stand.

MPS: **Only a life built on Christ will stand the test of time.**

- Let’s do some sitework on our hearts this morning

Read 24-27 to build context and give commentary

- Every one of us is building our lives on something... its called our worldview
 - A worldview is the set of core beliefs and assumptions through which a person sees and interprets all of life. It answers the big questions:
 - Who is God? (or is there a God?)
 - What is the meaning and purpose of life?
 - What is right and wrong?
 - What is the problem with the world and how is it fixed?
 - What happens after we die?
- Both houses were the same, yet one stood the test of time and the other fell

1. False Foundations will fail

Vs 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."*

- You can build your house on whatever you want – you have been given the freedom and agency to do so – but with warning.
- During the hot summer months, the sand around the Sea of Galilee was hard on the surface.
- But a wise builder knew that he needed to dig several feet below the surface to the bedrock in order to establish the foundation for his house.
- **on the sand.** The religious establishment had embraced a mere surface righteousness built on an unstable foundation of religious pretense.

What are the surface foundations we build our lives on today?

a. Emotions:

- Person converted to Mormonism because Mormons loved him more than the Christians. LGBTQ community as well.
- Where ever I can find belonging, acceptance, I will buy into all their requirements to become like them so I can be accepted by them – it's a desire for justification.
 - Pain of past, past hurts in religion, self-preservation, drama, everything has to be a fight, or everything has to be peace?
 - Every wind of cultural relativism
- I just want to do what I feel like doing – if you're building your life on feelings/emotions only, you are building your life on sand.
- **Only a life built on Christ will stand the test of time.**

b. Political affiliation

- Did you know that in the last two, last two to three years, the number one criteria that people are selecting for matching with someone is political affiliation?
- When political affiliation becomes the foundation on which we build our lives, we see our world through an us vs them lens - the world is broken because the other side won and gets to make the rules, and the hope for the world is that our team might win.
- Then we become an evangelist for whatever our team is, and building our lives on political affiliation will only last an election cycle.
- Politics is important. We should vote. We should be good citizens, but it's a weak foundation on which to build our lives. It's sinking sand.
- Noble sand is still sand. Only the Rock endures.

- **Only a life built on Christ will stand the test of time.**

c. Modern syncretism

Share story of meeting with the guys to cover this passage:

- Syncretism is the blending or mixing of different beliefs, religions, or worldviews into one new system — usually picking the parts you like from each and leaving out the parts you don't.
- It's like making a spiritual smoothie: "I'll take a little Jesus, a little karma, a little self-help, some Buddhism, and a dash of prosperity teaching."
- Hereditary sentiment – my grandma's bible (there is a crossover with emotions here)
- Karma is the belief (rooted in Hinduism, Buddhism, and New Age thought) that "what goes around comes around."
 - Every action — good or bad — will eventually bring a corresponding result, either in this life or in a future reincarnation.
 - Good deeds = good karma = future blessing
 - Bad deeds = bad karma = future suffering
 - Karma is another popular "sand" foundation today. It sounds fair and noble ("treat others well"), but it is built on human effort and self-justification. It leaves people in constant anxiety ("Am I doing enough good to outweigh my bad?") and offers no grace, no forgiveness, and no Savior. When the fierce storms come, karma cannot save you — only Christ can.
- Moral therapeutic deism is the belief that:
 - It's "**Moral**" (be a good person), "**Therapeutic**" (God exists to make me feel better), and "**Deism**" (a distant God who doesn't interfere much).
 - God exists and created the world.
 - God wants people to be **good, moral, nice** to each other.
 - The goal of life is to be **happy** and feel good about yourself.
 - God is there to help you when you have a problem, but otherwise He stays out of the way.
 - Good people go to heaven when they die.
 - "God is like a cosmic butler or a divine therapist — always ready to help, but not really involved in your daily life."
- Superstition is the belief that certain objects, actions, numbers, rituals, or events have the power to bring good or bad luck, control the future, or influence outcomes — apart from God's sovereign will.

- It's trusting in **magic-like forces** or **lucky charms** instead of trusting in Christ.

A. **Lucky Charms & Objects**

- Carrying a lucky coin, rabbit's foot, crystal, or "blessed" item. Throwing salt over your shoulder
- Wearing a specific jersey or outfit so "your team will win."
- Keeping a "lucky" pen for important tests or meetings.
- Manifesting" good things by repeating positive words or visualizing them.
- Many Christians today believe that physical items from Israel or pilgrimages to "anointed" sites carry special spiritual power:
- Buying **anointed oil, prayer shawls, bottled Jordan River water, or soil from Jerusalem** because they think these objects are more powerful than regular prayer.
- People are trusting in *things*(objects, places, or experiences) rather than in **Christ alone**. They treat the Holy Land like a giant lucky charm
- But its spiritual sand – yeah, but its still sand – only the rock endures

B. **Avoiding "Bad Luck" Rituals**

- Never walking under ladders, breaking mirrors, or opening umbrellas indoors. "Step on a crack, break your mother's back." Avoiding Black cats and the number 13.
- Saying "knock on wood" after stating something good.

C. **Astrology, Horoscopes & Zodiac Signs**

- "I can't make big decisions until I check my horoscope."
- Living by Mercury in retrograde or "full moon energy."
- "I'm a Scorpio, so that explains why I'm like this."

D. **Religious Superstitions Masquerading as Faith**

- "If I pray this exact prayer or light this candle, God *has* to answer."
- Touching a crucifix or Bible for protection instead of trusting the Lord.
- Believing certain "anointed" objects (oil, water, cloths) carry special power.

E. **Religious Superstition – "Holy Land" Objects & Pilgrimages**

- Going on a pilgrimage to Israel expecting a greater anointing, healing, or breakthrough simply because they walked where Jesus walked.
- Thinking, "If I can just get something blessed in the Holy Land, my prayers will be stronger and God will bless me more."

- Superstition is sand dressed up as spirituality.

- All of these are pieces of sand that seems like on the surface they hold up, but do not, and we become fools that fall.

2. Fierce Storms will come and test

- Not only are these houses the same, so is the storm

Of the sand foundation: 24 *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."*

Of the rock foundation: 25 *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.*

- Everyone here is getting rained on... the storm is coming.
- Following Jesus doesn't save us from storms, it saves us through them.

ILLUSTRATION: me looking at forecast during hunting season – we have all the tools of technology but these storms are seldom predictable.

- And sometimes rain falls on us like this: it's things we're not thinking about, things we're not expecting: grief, loss, pain that suddenly comes into our lives. We've got all our life planned out, and all of a sudden something that we weren't expecting hits it. That's the kind of rain Jesus is talking about. Sometimes rain falls on us like a pop-up thundershower. Sometimes rain comes in like a hurricane.
- Two things are true. Every one of us is building somewhere. Every one of us is going to experience rain.

THE TEST: The rain will show what kind of foundation the house was built on.

James 1:22–25 (ESV) **22** *But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23* *For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24* *For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25* *But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*

3. Firm Foundation stands forever

- You can't build your foundation, but you can build ON it.
- The context is eschatological (On that day I will say, Depart from me....)

24 *“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.*

25 *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.*

- So, the choice we have is, will we be a wise person who builds our house on a rock, or will we be a foolish person who builds our house on the sand?
- The wise builder isn't superhuman; he simply builds where Jesus says

Only a life built on Christ will stand the test of time.

What have you been building your life upon? (list the ones I covered)

Emotions
Political Affiliation
Modern Syncretism
Hereditary sentiment
Karma
Moral therapeutic deism
Superstition

In order to dig deep, you have to ask, “Will this foundation hold me?”

28 *And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, **29** for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.*

- The scribes, like the later rabbis, teach by citing what previous teachers had said. Their authority is the tradition. Jesus teaches directly from Scripture with His own authority, confidently correcting what previous generations have said.
- He is the sovereign king of the kingdom and also the rock of ages. He supports it, holds it together and rules it all at the same time.
- The surfside condo stood for 40 years and it collapsed all of a sudden.
- One engineer actually theorized that the problem could have been there from the beginning. It just took 40 years for that time for the problem to reveal itself.
- And so the question is, are you building your life on the solid rock of Jesus? What's your foundation?

- Because listen, storms and floods are coming. It might take 40 years for something to hit you hard, but storms and floods are coming, and if you've built your life on anything but the rock of Jesus and His word, your house will be washed away. So, what's your foundation today?
- What if I've already starting building my house and realize its on sand? Jesus has done the site work for a new foundation and your house can be renovated by His word.
- Be wise and build on the Rock who is Christ

QUESTIONS FOR GROUPS:

1 Looking at the false foundations we talked about (emotions, political affiliation, syncretism, karma, moral therapeutic deism, superstition, or even 'holy land' objects), which one do you most often catch yourself building your life on — even a little? What does that look like in your daily decisions or reactions?

2 Jesus says fierce storms will come and test our foundation. What storm are you facing right now (or have faced recently), and how is it revealing what your life is actually built on? What would it look like this week to do some 'site work' in your heart and rebuild more firmly on Christ alone?