



First Baptist Church Selmer

SERMON ON THE MOUNT • THE WISE MAN & THE FOOL • MATTHEW 7:24-29 •

11/30/2025

MAIN POINT

The wise build their foundations on Jesus. Fools build on anything else.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

If there were a headline about you in the local newspaper this week, what would it be?

Do you agree that actions speak louder than words? Why or why not?

Name someone whose walk aligns with his/her talk. How do you know?

Our lives should reflect that we're followers of Christ. Transformation through Jesus leads us to desire His ways, not our own. That doesn't mean we are perfect, but it does mean that we live according to the Bible and His teachings. Concluding His Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7), Jesus ended with a simple illustration: we're smart if we follow Him and we're fools if we don't.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 7:24-27.

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. 26 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. 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.” (ESV)

Jesus concluded the Sermon on the Mount with a simple illustration. A man with good sense would build his house on the rock. He would be aware that the most important element in building any structure is the foundation. Without a strong foundation, any structure is liable to collapse. Only a foolish person would build on unstable, shifting sand.

How do you know whether someone is wise or foolish?

How might the definitions for what a person considers “wise” and “foolish” differ between Christians and non-Christians?

The builders in the parable shared similarities. They had similar houses in similar neighborhoods and even desired similar success in life. And the same storm ravaged the houses that both men built. One thrived through the storm. One collapsed—the direct result of a substantial difference in their foundations.

John MacArthur provides even more clarity of these two builders, "There are at least four similarities between the wise man and the foolish man: both builders heard the gospel, the same sermon, the words of Christ; both proceed to build a house after having heard the same message; both apparently build their houses in the same general location; and both built houses that were similar; at least outwardly. The difference between the two is their foundation, their obedience to the Word."

Do you think people purposefully choose to establish their lives on “shifting sand”? Why or why not?

Before turning to Christ, each of us built our house on the sand. Did yours “collapse” at some point? Briefly share when you became aware that your life was built on something other than your relationship with Jesus.

Both builders had heard the words of Jesus, but what they did with them was very different. One builder acted on Jesus’ teachings, thus basing his life on a solid foundation that would not collapse. The other man did not live by Jesus’ words. Of course, Jesus was not talking about actual houses but lives. Every life needs an adequate, firm foundation that will not fail; a foundation rooted in Him and His truth.

In *The Christ-Centered Exposition Commentary*, Akin states, "The sources of authority that mold and shape our decision making and way of life can be boiled down to four: reason (I think), experience (I feel), tradition (I have always done), and revelation (God says in His Word). One or more of these authorities will govern how we live. We are going to grant ultimate authority in our lives to the source we believe provides reliable knowledge and wisdom for life's decisions."

The word translated "*wise*" (*phronimos*) appears seven times in Matthew and speaks most often about wisely preparing for the coming Messiah through faithful service and obedience to God's Word.

How is God similar to a firm foundation for a building?

What differences do you see between people whose foundation is Christ and those with other foundations?

How would you talk about the truth of these verses with someone whose life is not built on Christ?

Many people listen to sermons and read the Bible, but rarely act on God's Word. To hear and then ignore God's words is foolish indeed. Some people who go through life without building their lives on Christ's teachings seem to get along nicely. They put hope in other things, but the storms of life will reveal they didn't build on the right foundation.

Jesus lists only two outcomes in this parable. Why is there no middle ground?

Jesus could have ended His Sermon on the Mount in many ways. Why do you think He chose this specific parable?

Daniel Akin again states, "The foolish man is the person who hears faithful gospel preaching week after week but never changes. He hears the word again and again but never obeys... He thinks that because he has a form of godliness, he is safe. In actuality, he is headed toward a horrible and an eternal destruction."

Jesus ended the Sermon on the Mount with an invitation. It is your choice. Which will you choose?

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MATTHEW 7:28-29

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." (ESV)

What part of the crowd do you think you would have been in that day? The hypocritical religious elites or the genuine followers of Jesus?

Why is it important that we recognize Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount is still important for us as believers today?

As a result of the sermon, the crowds were amazed by Jesus' teaching. Louis A. Barbieri in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* states, "the word '*amazed*' literally means 'overwhelmed.' It suggests a strong, sudden sense of being astounded, and is stronger than '*thaumazo*' (to wonder or be amazed)."

Jesus made it clear that the Pharisees and scribes lived hypocritical lives because their foundation was faulty. Although they appeared one way on the outside, the storms of life would eventually reveal their true selves.

But followers of Jesus have a much different foundation, choose the narrow gate, and live their lives on the narrow road. Theologian Sinclair Ferguson puts it this way, "Jesus did not preach the Sermon on the Mount in order to be admired for his homiletical skills. He preached it to produce obedience."

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Christianity isn't just about what we know; it's about what we do with what we know. God instructs Christians to build their lives on Jesus and His teachings rather than on things that sound good. Your life should give evidence of your walk with Jesus in a personal relationship.

What helps you to maintain a strong, firm foundation in your relationship with Jesus?

What are ways to take every situation, circumstance, decision, or choice and bring it under the authority of Jesus and God's Word?

Who can we pray for right now whose life is built on sand? What can we do this week to help them?

PRAYER

Ask God to show you ways your group can better build their foundations on His rock and not on the sand. Pray that when the storms of life take us by surprise that we would trust in Him and His Word.

COMMENTARY

| MATTHEW 7:24-29

By the end of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (chaps. 5–7), crowds had joined the disciples in listening to Him. The people were amazed at the way Jesus taught. Unlike scribes (trained scholars in the Old Testament), Jesus had a God-given authority in His teaching. His teaching was alive with clear understanding and significance. Because Jesus was a true spokesman for God, we cannot ignore His teachings. There is great danger in hearing Jesus' words but not living by them.

Jesus concluded the sermon with a simple illustration. The parable—called variously “The Two Builders” or “The Two Foundations”—points out the differences between following Jesus' words and failing to follow them. “Sensible” could be translated as “thoughtful” or “wise.” A man with good sense certainly would build his house on the rock. He would be aware that the most vital element in building any structure is the foundation. Without an adequate foundation, any structure is liable to collapse. Only a foolish person would build on unstable, shifting sand.

How were the two builders alike? Both heard the words of Jesus. Each builder built his house, that is, had a way of living out his life. And as far as the story goes, the two houses looked equally strong—until the storm came. Both experienced rain, rivers, and winds—the difficulties that are a normal part of human life. These also point to the final testing: judgment day.

How were the two builders different? One builder was sensible (wise, prudent), but the other was foolish (senseless, stupid). One builder built on the rock (Jesus' words), but the other built on the sand (anything except Jesus' words). One builder's house (life) stood firm, but the other builder's house collapsed. One builder acted on Jesus' teachings, thus basing his life on a solid foundation that would not collapse in the final judgment. The other man did not live by Jesus' words. This is the key point Jesus made. Some persons who go through life without building their lives on Christ's teachings seem to get along

nicely. But the final judgment will reveal they didn't build on the right foundation. How great their collapse will be!

Although Jesus is the church's foundation, the foundation of the two houses represents doing (or not doing) what Jesus commanded us to do. Jesus contrasted the fate of those who heard His words and obeyed them with others who heard and did nothing.

Some interpreters believe the storms represent the damaging and even devastating events that befall all of us in this sin-cursed world. Those who hear and obey Jesus have a foundation that sustains them in hard times. They don't collapse into hopelessness but endure and persevere. Those who hear but do as they please are on their own and will suffer for it.

Jesus was not talking about houses but about lives. Every life needs a strong, firm foundation that will not fail. When lives are battered by floods and high winds, they will stand if the foundation is solid. The falling rain, rising rivers, and pounding winds signify all the trials and temptations that can destroy lives without a strong foundation. Living according to Jesus' words does not mean those who follow Him never sin. Yet it does mean believers avoid a sinful lifestyle. A key point is that the true Christian has made up his or her mind to practice Jesus' teachings.