

First Baptist Church Merritt Island
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October 13, 2024
Build Your Life On Jesus
Matthew 7:24-27

As most of you know, this morning was supposed to be part of our annual mission conference that began last Sunday. But, due to the storm, we decided to postpone our plan until next Sunday. For this morning, I feel compelled to focus our thoughts on a story Jesus told at the end of His most famous sermon – the Sermon on the Mount.

The Sermon on the Mount is a summary of Christ's teaching about the Kingdom He came to establish among the people of God. It's a vision of what Jesus desires to see in the lives of the people who follow Him as their One, True King. And our text is the conclusion to the entire Sermon on the Mount. It's sort of like the final word about God's Kingdom from Jesus the King.

Matthew 7:24–27

“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.”

Unlike many of Jesus' parables, this isn't a very complicated story. Jesus is comparing and contrasting two builders. One builder is wise, the other is a fool. The wise builder has a house that withstands the storms. The foolish builder has a house that is destroyed in the end. We should want to be wise. We should want to have lives that withstand the storms. And Jesus is telling us how to have exactly that. But, before we get to the main point of this parable, let me give you a couple of important observations.

The first thing I want you to notice is that Storms Come to Each House.

One hundred percent of the builders in Jesus' story endure storms. (notice it's plural). In other words, there is no storm-free life. Clearly, this was one of the reasons the Lord brought this text to my heart this week.

Like many of you, I began watching the path of Hurricane Milton last week. Initially, the models predicted the storm would pass directly over my house. At first, I was optimistic. Em and I have lived in Florida for 20 years and the one thing that I've come to expect from hurricanes is that they never go where they are initially predicted to go. But, with each passing day, I found myself thinking, "This thing really could pass directly over our house."

And, I'm not going to lie, I didn't want the storm to come to my house. I enjoy a rainy day as much as the next guy. I even enjoy the occasional tropical storm that forces us to stay inside and play board games with the kids. But I don't want a hurricane.

If you live in Florida long enough, you know the routine. You watch the path of the storm, and you pray for the people who will have to experience landfall. One location will endure the worst of the storm, and the rest of the state will be comparatively spared. And, from the very beginning of Milton, most of us knew we would likely be spared from the worst of storm compared to the community where it would make landfall. And that dynamic can make you feel very conflicted, can't it? You don't

want to pray for someone else to have to go through a storm just so you and your community can be spared.

But Jesus' story isn't like that. He doesn't say that one person will have to endure a storm while the other person is spared. He says that storms come to every single person.

There is no such thing as a storm-free life. And many of you know that truth all too well. Before Milton or Helene were on the radar, storms were already hitting home in the lives of people in this room, the kinds of storms that made a hurricane seem small in comparison. Family brokenness. Conflict. Terminal illness. Death. There are people in this place today who would gladly give up every material possession to have avoided the path of the storm they are facing.

But Jesus says storms come to every life.

And some of us have been sold a bill of goods that led us to believe following Jesus would take away all our problems. And there is some truth there because Jesus meets our deepest needs. He forgives our sins and provides a brand-new life. And when all is said and done, heaven is coming and there won't be any sickness or pain or loss there but, you probably don't need me to tell you we aren't in heaven yet. So, if you are in the middle of a storm that makes you question a lot of things about your faith. Jesus is clear, storms come to every life. Just because the winds are blowing, and the water is rising doesn't mean you are doing it wrong. Wise, faithful builders have to endure storms just the way foolish, unfaithful builders do. There is no such thing as a storm-free life.

That brings us to the next observation from Jesus' story. One person built on a rock while the other built on sand. One withstood the storm while the other was destroyed in the end.

In other words, Surviving the Storm depends on Your Foundation.

I don't need to know every detail of your life to know whether you will ultimately survive the storms. It doesn't come down to your income or your family of origin. It doesn't come down to your marital status or your level of physical fitness or your IQ. It comes down to your foundation. It comes down to what you are building your life on. And, according to Jesus, you are building your life on something. You have a foundation. It's that one thing that everything else in your life depends on. That one thing that would cause everything else to crumble if it were removed.

For some people, that thing is their job. For others, it's their marriage or their kids. It may be your health or your wealth or your obsession with a hobby. Whatever it is, your foundation is that one thing that absolutely affects everything else in your life.

It affects whether or not you take this job or that one. It affects how you raise your kids and how you treat your spouse and how you view your classmates. You have a foundation and Surviving the Storm depends on Your Foundation.

And while, in one sense, there are a million different foundations, in another sense, there are really only two.

Notice what Jesus says again:

v24 - Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man

v25 - And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man

In the end, there are really only two choices for us to make. When we hear Christ's teaching, we either believe and obey or we don't.

We either receive what Jesus has to say and put it into practice or we don't. It's not enough to hear the truth. It's not enough to simply say you believe the truth. It boils down to whether or not we truly believe what Jesus says in a way that puts Christ's teaching into practice. And that's what determines whether or not you will survive the storms. That's what determines whether you are wise or are foolishly setting your life up for disaster.

And that's the point. That's our big idea.

Big Idea: Wise people build their lives on Jesus by doing what He says.

Friend, you will not be able to avoid the storms of this life, but Jesus guarantees that you can avoid being destroyed by them. For that reason, nothing is more important than taking an honest inventory of how we are building our lives.

One of the images that I saw from the storm was of a home that was completely washed away by the storm surge. It was tragic. A family built a home right on the ocean. I can't imagine how much money it must have cost. I can't imagine how many dreams they had about the life they would live in such a beautiful place. I can't imagine what it must have been like for them to see their entire life's work washed away in a matter of minutes.

But, in an infinitely more important way, that dynamic will occur countless times when everything is said and done. Billions of people will get to the end and watch their entire life's work washed away forever.

Are you building wisely or foolishly? Will your life last for all eternity or will it collapse and fall when it's all said and done? How are you building your life?

And, as we close, I want to give you three points of application in response to this word from Jesus.

1. Believe Jesus

Jesus knows what He's talking about. He is God in the flesh. He's the Creator who made you and knows how life works best.

For instance, let's look at what Jesus said at the very beginning of His sermon.

So, go with me to Matthew 5. These first few verses are a summary of the whole sermon, they are referred to as the beatitudes. Let's just look at the first four...

Matthew 5:2-6

2 And he opened his mouth and taught them, saying:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

5 "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Poor in spirit...that means you realize you are spiritually bankrupt. That word "poor" was a word that described people who were so poor and so needy they had no way to earn a living other than to rely on the mercy of others. And Jesus starts His teaching there. You have to see that you are totally

bankrupt spiritually and have nothing to offer God but a lifetime of spiritual debt you can never repay. Do you believe Jesus?

He follows that by saying you should mourn. You should have a sense of sadness, of brokenness, over your condition before God. So, when Jesus says you have to acknowledge how spiritually poor and weak you are, He points out that you don't take pride in your sin, you mourn over it. You realize it will separate you from God and that grieves you. Do you believe Jesus?

He then says there is a meekness to your heart, a kind of humility that doesn't have to have your own way. It means you can bow before someone else, namely Jesus, and say, "You are in control of me." That's how Jesus says you will be blessed. Do you believe Jesus?

He then says you have to hunger and thirst for righteousness.

That means you have to want something you know you don't have. You have to desire what's right even as you acknowledge that you aren't right, or at least not right on your own. Do you believe Jesus?

What Jesus is saying to put into practice. To acknowledge you need something you don't have. To be humble enough to bow before Jesus and seek to follow Him. To see that you are spiritually poor and have nothing but brokenness to offer.

Have you ever come to that place in your life? Have you turned to Jesus in humble faith and acknowledged that only Jesus can make you right and keep you right in the eyes of God? Do you believe Jesus in a way that you are trusting in Jesus as your personal Lord and Savior?

Be wise in how you respond. Come to Jesus today for salvation. Believe in Him and be saved in every way you need to be saved.

2. Obey Jesus

Faith in Jesus always leads to obedience.

If you truly believe Jesus is who He is – your Wise, Good, and Holy King – then you'll do what He says and build your entire life on Him. You'll build your marriage, your job, your family, your retirement, your financial plan, your hobbies...you'll build your entire life on Jesus. That's part of what it means to confess Jesus as your Lord, the One who is in control.

There's a shadow of this every time we prepare for a hurricane. Millions of people are glued to their televisions in the days leading up to a storm. And the people on TV are constantly telling people what to do. They tell you to stock up on essentials. They tell you to seek shelter. They tell you to evacuate your home and go someplace else. The only problem is that the majority of people have heard the same thing dozens of times before and have realized that the people on TV aren't always reliable. They watch correspondents standing on a beach, wearing helmets and safety glasses, bracing themselves against the wind. And then they see an elderly couple on a leisurely stroll in the background and realize it was all a charade. We lose faith in the people on the Weather Channel, so we don't do what they say.

When we don't have faith in someone, we disregard what they say we should do. But, when we really trust someone, it's a different story. We follow the instructions of people we genuinely trust.

And that's how it is with Jesus. When we truly believe in Jesus, we do what He says. Faith in Jesus always leads to obedience.

And, let me show you one thing Jesus says in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 6:33

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Jesus says to seek God's Kingdom and His righteousness first and foremost, above the pursuits of this world, above the American dream, above the way this world says we should live.

Are you obeying Jesus? Are you seeking His righteousness in your life? Are you seeking Him in His word? Are you seeking Him in prayer? Are you seeking Him in your relationships? Are you seeking to make Him known to your neighbors and the nations by living on His mission?

Wise people put the words of Jesus into practice through obedience.

3. Rejoice in Jesus

For those who are building your life on Jesus, you have reason to rejoice. Why? Because you will survive the storm. That's His promise. He will see you through.

Philippians 1:6

He who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 5:10

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

He will see you through!

No matter how high the water is rising in your life, Jesus will see you through. No matter how strong the winds are blowing, Jesus will see you through. No matter how hard the test, no matter how dark the night, no matter how intense the storm may be, Jesus will see you through!

So, go ahead and rejoice. When your life is built on Jesus, nothing will destroy you in the end, not even death itself. Jesus will see you through. Praise be to God for His unspeakable gift to us in Jesus!