

## Matthew 7:24-29 (NKJV)

<sup>24</sup> "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:

<sup>25</sup> and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.

<sup>26</sup> But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand:

<sup>27</sup> and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."

<sup>28</sup> And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching,

<sup>29</sup> for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

We are moving on from one of the scariest passages in scripture. We looked at the serious danger of self deception. Remember that we always **believe most** that which we **tell ourselves**.

I want to leave a quote from brother Jones ringing in our hearts before moving on to our current passage.

He says this:

**The greatest insult to the Lord is a will that is not completely and entirely surrendered; and whatever else we may do—however great our offerings and sacrifices, however wonderful our works in His name—it will avail us nothing. If we believe that Jesus of Nazareth is the only begotten Son of God and that He came into this world and went to the cross of Calvary and died for our sins and rose again in order to justify us and to give us life anew and prepare us for heaven—if you really believe that, there is only one inevitable deduction, namely that He is entitled to the whole of our lives, everything without any limit whatsoever. That means that He must have control not only in the big things, but in the little things also; not only over what we do, but how we do it. We must submit to Him and His way as He has been pleased to reveal it in the Bible; and if what we do does not conform to this pattern, it is an assertion of our will, it is disobedience, and as repellent as the sin of witchcraft. Indeed, it belongs to the type of conduct that makes Christ say to certain people: 'Depart from me, ye that work iniquity'. Workers of iniquity! Who are they? The people who said: 'Lord, Lord,' the people who prophesied in His name and in His name cast out devils and in His name did many wonderful works. He calls them 'workers of iniquity'**

**because, in the last analysis, they were doing it to please themselves and not in order to please Him. Let us then solemnly examine ourselves in the light of these things.**

Can we make too much of this warning? I don't think so. Because self deception is often the most serious deception. No one can fix lies **we tell to ourselves** until we actively **humble ourselves** with the realization that our pride is often our greatest enemy. It is pride that refuses to see ourselves in utter reality. And seeing ourselves completely accurately is the cause for humility, the state that God promises to bless.

Are you surrendered to the will of God in **every known area of your life**? Is there any area of your life you are saying to God, absolutely not. I will not **do that thing** or I will not **stop doing** that thing. Your soul would be most improved if, instead of listening to one more sermon, you would go somewhere private and do business with this sinful attitude. No continued involvement in any of our churches ministries will do you any good if you maintain such an attitude.

Hopefully we are all wholly submitted to God's will as much as we know it. But we must keep in mind, anything less than that is all that it takes to practice lawlessness.

OK let's move on.

We come in our text to the third picture regarding **deception**.

The first was the deception of the **false prophet**. We may be deceived by someone coming to us looking like a sheep but having anti-sheep intentions. The second was the deception of thinking just because someone has **good theology** and **powerful works** that this person is saved. The focus is particularly on self deception.

This morning we will look at the self deception we are capable of when we trust we possess salvation but this salvation gets proven to be false by life situations.

Mr. Wiersby brings out that the earlier **two ways** illustrate the **start** of the life of faith.

The **two trees** illustrate the growth and results of the life of faith **here and now**.

And the **two houses** illustrate the **end** of this life of faith.

The **two ways** tell us to examine **the cost** of our profession.

The **two trees** tell us to investigate if our lives are **truly changed**

The **two houses** remind us that true faith in Christ will last through both the storms of life and the final judgment.

OK now we look at our text.

**24 "Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock:**

We need to notice the word "**liken**". We see that true believers are **like** something. They are **like** a person who is wise and who builds his house on the rock. Now the person in this case is the same. The person is a person. A PERSON who **obeys Christ** is **LIKE** a PERSON who builds a house. But to get the most out of this analogy we must understand what **the house** is. And the house is clearly an analogy of how this person **builds and shapes his own life**. We must understand that or we will only be focused on good building practices for homes.

I want to start with what might be the most important point. I risk emphasizing something at the beginning but I think it will help us apply things throughout the rest of the sermon.

It is very simple.

The house in our illustration is built of **two different methods**.

There is the method of the man who **hears what God says and does it**.

There is the method of the man who **hears what God says and does not do it**.

You and I are always in the **process** of building a life. We are building our house. And there are two methods. We can build a life based on **scriptural principles** in a life **submitted to God's word**. Or we can build a life built on **something else**... strong feelings, perceptions, instincts, worldly advice, other's opinions, compelling desires.... Pretty much **anything** but God's word. What does this house building **look like**?

The house is built **one decision** at a time.

The most important decision is how we respond to the call of Christ on our lives. That ultimately determines our **destination** and **much of our path**.

But there are **more decisions** to follow.

We start as young children. Will we obey our parents and honor them. One moment at a time. One decision at a time. How will we treat the kids we play with? How much will we pay attention in Church? Who will we look to when we need **advice** or **counsel**? Who will we confess our sin to. All of that is life building.

Then as we mature we must determine how we will handle our **sexuality**.

Will we do what **God says** or what we feel **strongly like doing**? Who will we choose to hang out with and why. How we will interact with our friends. How we will study at school. How we will interact with our parents and church members. How seriously we will take study of the Bible and prayer. How seriously will we take obedience to God.

Then as adults we must determine who we should marry? Will we go by what **God says** or **make up our own rules**. Will wives actually really, **from the heart**, submit to their husbands and respect them? Will husbands take on Christ's role in the family? Will the bible be the primary resource in raising the kids? Will men prioritize work and family and church **properly**? Will men **lead their families** and **chart the course** for them? Will they actively involve their families in church? And all along will men and women keep **going back to the Word** as the ultimate authority for everything.

This is how lives are built. They are built one decision at a time. But there is something about the **well built** lives. Each good decision must come from an **active faith in Jesus Christ**. The right moral decision is not enough.

Everything in the well built life must be a **faithful response to a loving God**. That is all that counts in building a good life.

Brad posted something on Facebook a ways back. It said "**You'll never change your life until you change something you do daily. The secret of your success is found in your daily routine.**" This is true because every day we are **life building, house building**. Ask an old believer with the kind of life you want **how they got there**. They will certainly ascribe all the good things to the blessings of God. But if you ask them **how they lived each day** they will describe good life building activities. Most of the time they are not **dramatic** things. Maybe it involved **going to work every day** that one was able to go to work. Maybe it involved feeding, clothing, bathing children and doing the unending work of keeping up a house. Maybe it involved being committed to a body of believers and prioritizing that fellowship over other competing possibilities. My point is that those lives were not built **suddenly** with **one dramatic decision**. Jesus does not say here that the one who **hears these sayings of Mine, and believes them and prays a prayer at one point in their lives are the ones with the houses on solid foundation**. No it is **those who hears what He says and puts His words into daily practice. They do them and keep doing them**. The lives are built one day at a time, one decision at a time. And that life was not zapped upon them by God. No one gets **zapped** with a **well lived life**.

**Regeneration was zapped** on believers by God. We could not have gotten it any other way. But sanctification happens **one decision** at a time **one day** at a time.

No **good house** springs up without going through the hard work of the building process. No **solid life** springs up without going through the hard work of the sanctification process. And just like a house, if you build on a **good foundation** and **don't skip any steps** in the building process, you will

normally end with a solid house. And if you submit your life, decision by decision, every day when no one is looking, to obey Christ in all you do, you will normally end up with a well lived life.

Our decisions **matter**. Every **single one** matters. How you live today matters. Even those days that you **cannot imagine matter, DO MATTER**. Each day is a building day. If you take days off, you can expect problems as a result. If a builder skips a few days of work and just takes up at some later date as if that work is done, if he never goes back and redoes it, that house is going to have **some problems**. Living for Christ does not set us free from that kind of natural consequence. We must faithfully daily live a sanctified life. And without a doubt, sanctification is hard work.

But the great news is that the **hard work pays off**. Being old has some advantages. For just one example, there are lots of day that I did not want to go to work. But I went anyway. Now God certainly blessed our family in lots of ways. But that simple task of going to work every day now has placed us in a decent financial position. That is an earthly example of just how doing the **undramatic thing over and over** builds up over time. Our lives are the same way. So be encouraged. Those faithful actions you do every day have an effect. The discipline you do your child, the diaper you change, the timeclock you click, the job you price, the employee you oversee, the Bible time and prayer time you spend, the book you read, the meal you cook. If you are doing all that for the Lord, you are **building a good house**. Keep it up! Often the actions that are the **least dramatic** have the **greatest long term effect**. Don't grow weary in doing good.

OK

That is the introduction.

OK We have **2 men** and **2 houses**

Let's first look at the similarities.

First, **both hear the same message**. So Jesus is narrowing down his topic here. He is addressing **His immediate audience**. Do you ever feel good about hearing a good sermon because **making yourself listen to it** makes you feel like you did something valuable? Well undoubtedly it is better to listen to Gods word than to lots of other things we could listen to. But Jesus here is addressing two radically different kind of people and they are **BOTH** listening to good sermons.

Neither man had an **advantage** or **disadvantage** regarding the sermon he was listening to. The sermons were PERFECT theology. People could have even been proud that they are picking the best preacher, the most theologically solid preacher to listen to. Think about it. These people prioritized listening

to Jesus. Jesus was the preacher that was not holding his punches. He was preaching convicting messages. And they are saying **yay Jesus. Preach it Jesus. We love your preaching Jesus.** So both men picked to listen to Christ and both have heard from Him.

Second, both men are going through **the same process**. They are both doing the same thing. In the illustration they are building a house. But in reality they are **building a life**. They are making decisions every day, every moment. They are breathing the same air. They have the same raw materials to work with. Same kind of life.

Third, they are in the same environment. Given that the same rain, floods and wind seem to happen to both houses, we can assume there is nothing different about the environment. It is not that one has a **great location** to build houses and the other **does not**. We are not looking at a result based on the fact one man had an **advantage** over the other. Building a godly life was not easier for one man than the other. They were dealing with the same environment.

Fourth, they have the **same kind of house**. It is the house built of the same materials. In the illustration it would be building materials. In reality it is made of the same **daily decisions**. Those are the building materials. So it isn't like one had a different kind of house than the other. Even the decisions made in these lives could have looked the same. Both might prioritize church and Bible reading. Both might respect marriage and live good lives. The houses might look **identical**. By looking on the outside of the house you might not be able to tell the difference. And that is really the scary thing. You could not tell the Christian house and the non Christian house apart. This non Christian life and Christian life looked the same on the surface. It is just like Judas looked like all the rest of the disciples. The houses looked the same.

The fifth similarity is that both houses were tested by the same thing. **the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house**

This happened to both houses. So it is not that one person's life simply was not tested like the other one was. One did not have the hard things happen to it that the other did. And that is why one stood and the other did not. No, both experienced the same kinds of tests. The thing that made the result different was not the **degree of difficulty** each faced. **Something else** determined the success.

Now what was **different** about the men and their houses?

First, one man **obeyed the sayings of Christ** and the other one **did not**. Now we know that this obedience cannot just be a legalistic carrying through of commands like the pharisees did. This good builder was taking Jesus's words **to heart**. He was examining his life regarding the **murder train** we talked about. He was ridding his heart of the desire for **revenge** and trusting God to take care of it. He was purifying his heart of even the desire for adultery. He was choosing to trust God rather than worry. This man would be implementing what Jesus said in ways that **no external evaluator** would even know. Because this man **got it**. He was not trying to **act** like a Christian. He was trying to **live like one** because he is living unto the Lord. The Lord is the **audience** with which he **most concerns himself**.

One man was living for Christ and the other was living for self, even if he was involved in church activity and moral living. For one, living in **God's approval** is his soul's desire. God has gripped his heart and now he **lives for his Lord**. The other may have added Jesus to his life and may have selfish reasons to do some of the things Christians do. But his reasons are not **faithful** ones. He is not regenerate, so all of his actions are motivated by fleshly reasons.

Second, the houses had **different foundations**. The house that stood was built on the rock. The other was built on the sand.

What does that mean. What is the rock? What is the sand.

**The rock is not difficult at all.**

**Deuteronomy 32:3-4 (NKJV)**

**<sup>3</sup> For I proclaim the name of the LORD: Ascribe greatness to our God.**

**<sup>4</sup> He is the Rock, His work *is* perfect; For all His ways *are* justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright *is* He.**

**Psalms 19:14 (ESV)**

**<sup>14</sup> Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.**

**1 Corinthians 10:1-4 (NKJV)**

**<sup>1</sup> Moreover, brethren, I do not want you to be unaware that all our fathers were under the cloud, all passed through the sea,**

**<sup>2</sup> all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea,**

**<sup>3</sup> all ate the same spiritual food,**

**<sup>4</sup> and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.**

## 1 Peter 2:7-8 (NKJV)

<sup>7</sup> Therefore, to you who believe, *He is precious*; but to those who are disobedient, "*The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone,*"

<sup>8</sup> and "*A stone of stumbling And a rock of offense.*" They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed.

Christ is clearly the rock. That is probably no surprise to any of us. The point is that a life **built upon Christ** is the only life that is capable of withstanding judgment. So how do we **build** upon the rock? First we must **know Christ** and receive his salvation for our souls. Then accordingly we must submit all of the rest of our lives to Him.

What is the sand? The simple answer is anything else, anything other than Christ.

Brother MacArthur says-

**The sand is based on human opinions, attitudes, and wills, which are always shifting and always unstable. To build on sand is to build on self-will, self-fulfillment, self-purpose, self-sufficiency, self-satisfaction, and self-righteousness. To build on sand is to be unteachable, to be "always learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth" (2 Tim. 3:7).**

In context, for sure, some of the sand was the Pharisee's teaching. They may have heard the teachings of Jesus, but they were building on **something else** or **something additional**.

We build on sand when we base our decisions on anything but a faithful submission to Christ and His word. **Anything** will do. We may have strong opinions about any number of things that stem from all kinds of places. We may be absolutely confident that our lives are being lived wonderfully and wisely, but we are just fooling ourselves if they are not lived submitted to Christ.

Now let's take a look at wise and foolish here.

The **wise man** did **wise things** for **wise reasons** and had a **good outcome**. The **foolish man** did **foolish things** for **foolish reasons** and had a **bad outcome**.

The wise man's example is pretty simple. He listened to reasoning from an expert. He acted like the man who **did not know** how to build a house so he did what the **Expert** of house building said. He did not **pretend to know** something **he did not know**. He did not rush ahead and build without consultation. He listened very carefully to the instructions about how to build



a house. And he went exactly by the instructions given to him. He did not take shortcuts. He did not cut corners in order to avoid work and difficulty. He obeyed the teachings of Christ, as hard as that was. And it paid rich rewards for him.

So what was the foolish man like?

### **The foolish man built his house on the sand**

What does that tell us? What kind of person **would that be** to do such a thing?

Mark probably could have saved a lot of time and effort if he did not spend so much time on the basement of his house. He probably could have poured a **couple of inches** of cement in his footer. He could have just stacked blocks on blocks without mortar. He certainly did not need to put **as much gravel** around the outside of the foundation. But what would that have told us about Mark? He would have been doing the **quickest and easiest** thing to get that house in place. And it probably would have been ok for the first summer. But to make it last, for it to stand all the things that Garrett County winters will bring to it, Mark had to do things that took a **lot more work** and cost a **lot more money**. Mark listened to those who know a thing or two about foundations over the years. He submitted his will to the knowledge of those who are experts. He did not think he knew it all. He consulted when he needed to. And now the foundation of that house **will last**.

Have you ever dug a hole for a fencepost or a deck or a mailbox or a sign? Isn't it tempting to stop digging at 18 inches? I know when I reach that depth I start thinking, I am pretty deep. I am hot. I am tired of shoveling. That ought to be enough. But we all know what happens when we stop there. After a winter or two things begin to fall over. Why? Because we were lazy. We stopped doing the work before we reached the depth that the future events require. Our laziness, or lack of knowledge, drove us to a foolish error. That is what this lazy builder in our story did. He was not willing to dig through all the sand to reach the rock. He could do it quick. He could do it easy. Why do all that extra work. He could set that house in place without all that added effort. Why keep digging?

And the other thing we see is that this builder must have thought he knew it all. Anyone could have told him about house building. Anyone with any contractor wisdom could have told him, you need to put in the extra effort or you might as well put in no effort at all. You need to hit the rock before you build. But this man trusted his own knowledge, his own instincts on building, his own way of doing things. He didn't have to read and submit. He just knew. Are we that kind of people?

I find that there are a lot of people in churches like this.

I had a friend very vehemently criticize our church because the pastor does not stand at the door and shake hands with everyone leaving. When I asked for a verse that said this should be done he basically said this is what you need to do in America to have a good church.

Lots of people think that a church must have a Sunday morning and evening service, Sunday school, an altar call now and then, and Wednesday prayer meeting to be a real church. This is just an example of foolish builders.

Anyone who places an evaluation on a church that is not based on study of what the Bible says a church should be is like one of these foolish builders.

Anyone who makes life decisions without finding out what scripture says about those topics is a foolish builder.

Think about **people's lives**. Think of all the moral **shoulds** that are said today about a person's life or family. Kids **should** be involved in all kinds of sports.

People **should** drive nice cars. People should have a half a million dollars saved for retirement. Married people **should** be in love. If a person is not happy in a marriage they **should** leave it. Children **should** go to college.

People **should** let their feelings tell them what they should do with their bodies. If I am angry, it is someone else's fault. These are foolish builder

**shoulds**. These are not **shoulds** that build on the solid foundation. I am not against many of the things I just said. But they are not the moral foundation. They are not from the word of God. They are not things that save your soul or stand up in eternity. They are man made rules that people use when building their lives.

The wise man builds using God's shoulds. He does not assume that he knows how to run his own life. But he believes that **God does** and God reveals it in His Word. He understands it will be **hard work**. He understand there are no shortcuts. He does not expect that God will **zap him** with a finished life. He doesn't even pray that way. He knows the life is built **step by step**.

The foolish man uses **his own** should. He assumes that his perceptions and intuitions for how to live life are **good enough**. He does not look for God's mandates but picks things up from his environment. He does not want to spend any more effort than **he has to** doing those things that are difficult or arduous. And he just expects that whatever he is doing will come out with a fine outcome.

Now what about the storms. These could be events in life. But more than likely they are ultimately God's final judgement. And that is really the main point. Is this not what we all want? We want our life to stand up in the day of

judgment. And it will not be because our works were perfect. It will only be because the **life we lived** was built upon the **foundation of the gospel**. It will only be because we **truly were believers** and the **grace of God** caused us to live a life that glorified Him. That is what this is all about.

So what about **your life**? Do you completely distrust your own instincts and perceptions unless they are **guided by God's word**? Are you willing to accept that the way **God wants us to live** is not going to be comfortable? It will be challenging. Because to build a good house we need to dig until we hit bedrock. We cannot skip the work stage.

We will take up our study of this housebuilding next week, Lord willing. But this week I think it would be very good if we ask ourselves, **are all my decisions submitted to the Lord?** Is everything I do done because **I want to please the Lord?** That will give us plenty of homework. What that question really amount to is **“what kind of house am I really building?”**