

THE EARLY PARABLES OF JESUS

Message 8

Passage: Matthew 7:24-27

Words: 6236

INTRO: Before we begin this morning let me mention something I think I have never mentioned. Sermons can be classed largely into three types. There is the expositional message, the textual message and the topical message. Not all are agreed exactly what an expositional message is, but basically it goes through a book verse by verse. A textual message takes a verse or shorter passage and expounds on that text. The topical message deals with topics like a doctrine or a present issue like say the head covering or alcohol or obedience to government and such like. I know of nothing in Scripture that gives preference to one particular type of message and I think some of it depends on the gifting of the pastor. One thing is certain though, and that is that doctrine has been downplayed for a long time in the Church and it has caused great weakness in Christianity.

It is commonly viewed that the expositional message is the best type of preaching. I have done many expositional messages and many topical ones. In this present series I am lifting out the early parables out of Jesus' teaching and showing that Jesus had a purpose in giving these parables and a purpose in the order in which He gave them and I think you have to cover them like I am to see that purpose. It is easy in expositional preaching to miss something like this, and it is not easy to present it if you have 15 to 20 messages between the parables. This is the third series I have done on the parables of Jesus, and most likely the last. But I see a progression in the three groupings of parables I find in the teaching of Christ. The first group prepares for the great change from the Old Covenant to the New, as we will yet see. The second shows what the Church age will be like. At the time Jesus gave these parables nobody knew that a time like the Church age was coming. The last group shows what will happen to Israel because they will reject their Messiah.

We have now covered four of five metaphors or parables in the first group of parables and all have been given in Jesus' first extended message which we call the Sermon on the Mount. The first parable was that of the believer being likened to the salt of the earth. The second was the believer likened to light. The third was the twig and the beam as related to judging. The fourth was that of the narrow and broad gate.

Now as I understand the sermon on the Mount, the Lord laid out principles that govern the kingdom of God or the kingdom of heaven. It gives principles that apply to the Church age believer. The people of the kingdom are the believers who are found all over the world. This kingdom, unlike the time of the OT, does not have a central earthly country or city. The believer's citizenship is in heaven, and our city is there too. And we are governed from that heavenly country and from that city, the New Jerusalem. Our King is the Lord Himself.

And those who are reigned over by the Lord in that kingdom, enter the narrow gate at the first and second beatitude. Here they become poor in spirit and here they mourn their sin. And then repentance takes place and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thus they have left the city of destruction and entered the narrow path to life. They have entered this path by grace through faith, and they must continue by grace through faith to arrive at the celestial city.

And now the Lord will close this great sermon with one last parable, that of the wise man who built his house on the rock. This parable closes the application to the parable of the wide and narrow gate. The wide gate speaks, in my view, of all those who claim to use the Bible as the Word of God, but they are in fact not saved. They think they are, but they are not. The narrow gate speaks of the true Christian. The city out of which these gates lead is the world of lost mankind. Standing at the gates are false prophets who have every appearance of being Christian. Jesus then shows us how one will be able to detect the true from the false preacher.

V. THE TWO HOUSES

A. The Parable

Well, our next parable is found in Matthew 7:24-27 and we'll read it. Jesus gave the words of this parable in conclusion to the previous parable and in conclusion to the whole sermon like this:

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:*

25 *"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.*

26 *"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:*

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

That is the parable before us this morning. So we begin with the setting of this parable.

B. The setting

I have mentioned in an earlier message that Matthew 7:13-27 is a unit of Scripture. It all belongs together. It begins with a brief parable in verses 13-14 and ends with a brief parable in verses 24-27. The first was the parable of the wide and narrow gate. This one is the parable of the two houses.

Verses 14 and 15 are tied together with the Greek particle *de*, which I translated as, "So". Let me put it briefly like this. The Lord speaks of the two gates and two paths, and then says, "So, beware of false prophets." Then He describes them in verses 16-20. Verse 20 closes that thought with the word, "Therefore..." The Lord then explains that by saying, "Not everyone who says to Me Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven." Then He explains, and our passage then continues with the conjunction, "Therefore..." This conjunction ties this parable to the preceding section and makes it a conclusion. So these verses are all bound together as one unit. And so, the setting of this parable is the Sermon on the Mount. But this parable forms the conclusion to the conclusion.

The conclusion to the whole sermon begins in verses 13-14 where we have the two gates. Numerous things come in twos in this passage. These two gates lead to two paths and two destinations. In verse 15 we have two kinds of trees; good and evil; and two kinds of fruit, good and

bad; and now we come to two houses with two different builders building on two different kinds of foundations.

In this parable, the Lord lays before us now two options, and two only, and only one good one.

C. The interpretation

1. General Thoughts

So what is the interpretation of this parable of the two houses?

We would conclude that the Lord had a different purpose in this parable of the two houses than He did in the parable of the two gates leading out onto two roads. The purpose of a gate is to allow one to enter or exit, and in the case of this parable, to exit a city. I proposed that the narrow gate pictures where the true Christian enters his journey to glory. The wide gate was where those enter who want to go to glory, but they have been deceived. They think they are on the way to heaven, but the end of that path is hell.

Now we have before us two men and both men build a house. What do these two houses speak of? Wherein lies the difference between these two houses and the two gates? Now I propose the difference lies in this; a gate out of a city leads onto a path, and the path leads to a destination, and the destination of both roads promised to be the celestial city, or heaven. But there was one true path and one false one. The true one was narrow and difficult and the wide one was broad. Few were on the narrow road and many were on the wide road.

So a pathway leads to a destination, and herein lies the difference between these two parables. A house does not lead to a destination. It is a place to live in. The parables of the two roads speak of the place one is headed. The parable of the two houses speaks of where or how one lives.

Now I said that in the parable of the two gates, that there were three groups of people, not two. Those on the

narrow road speak of those who are leaving the city of destruction and are going to heaven. Those on the broad road speak of those who are leaving the city and think they are going to heaven but they have been deceived and when they die, they go to hell.

The third group is those who remain in the city. They are not interested in going to heaven. They are interested in their own things. I believe those on the broad road are those who use the Bible and claim the God of the Bible is their God. Those in the city have produced their own gods. They have their own gods. They do not care for the Bible or the God of the Bible.

Now I would propose that in this parable of the two houses we also have three groups, but only two are mentioned. The first group is pictured by the man who built his house on the rock. This is the true Christian. The second group is pictured by those who build their house on the sand. This pictures those who think they are Christians, but are not. The third group is all those who are not building a house.

So let me give you some evidence for the first group, the ones who build their house on the rock. We look at verse 24. It says:

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:

Notice that this man hears Jesus' sayings. And secondly, not only does he hear, but he does what he hears. Now you know what that means. It means he believes what he hears. You only truly believe when you hear God's Word and do it. So we have the true Christian here.

Now notice in verse 26 that the second man building a house does not speak of all of the rest of mankind. It says:

26 *"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:*

Now notice that this man also hears Jesus' sayings just as well as the first. So we are not talking about the rest of the world. We are not even talking about all those religions that do not use the Bible. We are talking about someone who is using the Bible.

So if we have one group who hears God's Word and they do it, and we have another group who hears God's Word and does not do it; then what we do not have is all the rest of the world. It is those who in the previous parable remained in the city. It is all those who do not profess to be Christians at all. So we have three groups.

Now there are some similarities between this parable and the one of the two gates. You see, those who enter the narrow gate and those who enter the broad gate both were interested in the destination of their souls at the end of the road. They were spiritually interested. They were interested in the things of the God of the Bible. They both desired to go to heaven.

The same holds true in each of the men who built these two houses. They wanted to be protected from the onslaughts of the weather outside. They realized that discomfort and dangers lay in the weather outside and they wanted to be protected from them. So I propose that both houses speak of the same matters. Both of these men had a desire to be in a place of safety from the rain, the floods, the storms and the wind. So they both desired the same thing. Further, they both recognized the same dangers and thus wanted to be sheltered from them.

Now the great difficulty in this parable is interpreting the parts. I think we could agree that the rock foundation is Christ, but what of the house? What does it represent? And I propose that it speaks of our spiritual life. We are not here speaking of a literal, physical house; that much is clear. So

these two builders are both seeking to look after their spiritual lives. That is the house they are building.

Turn to 2 Corinthians 5. Paul likens our bodies to a house in this chapter. In life, aging processes set in and eventually various kinds of sicknesses can attack our bodies and we die. So look at verses 1-4:

1 For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

2 For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven:

Our earthly house is under threat of dissolving. Now our physical life is here contrasted with our spiritual life. Our physical body is aging and eventually it falls, if not from old age, then from something like cancer or other sicknesses. Death is inevitable, other than if we are alive when the rapture takes place, we will all die. There are no options. But even at the rapture, the physical must be changed.

But there is a great consolation here. Paul says we, that is Christians, have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. I expect that it is this house we are building. Then Paul says that we groan in this, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. This, I believe, speaks of our resurrected body and we long to be inside that new house.

But what of the rain, the floods and the wind? You see, in our physical bodies there are all kinds of threats to our life. Just so, there are all kinds of threats to our spiritual lives. Let me give you an example of what one commentator says, John Gill. He says:

These several metaphors of "rain," "floods," "stream," and "winds," may design the temptations of Satan, the persecutions of the world, the corruptions of a man's own heart, and the errors and false doctrines

of men; from all which such a man is safe, who is built upon the rock Christ Jesus; see #Isa 32:2 not but that the rain of temptation may descend upon him, with great violence and force, but shall not beat him down; he shall be made able to bear the whole force of it; the gates of hell cannot prevail against him; the floods of persecution may be cast after him, but shall not carry him away; the stream of corruption may run strong against him, yet shall not overset him; and the wind of divers and strange doctrines may blow hard upon him, but not cast him down: some damage he may receive by these several things, but shall not be destroyed; he may be shaken by them, but not so as to be removed off of the foundation, on which he is laid; yea, he may fail from some degree of the steadfastness of his faith, but not so as to fail totally and finally; the reason is, because he is founded on the rock Christ Jesus, which is sure and immoveable: whence it appears that such a man acts the wise and prudent part, and may be truly called "a wise man".

2. Wise Man

So let us now consider what makes the wise man a wise man. We go back to verses 24-25:

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:*

25 *"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.*

In the earlier passage we learned how to tell a true preacher from a false one. Listen to verse 21:

21 *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.*

You see, it is not what one does in ministry that determines if one is truly a Christian. It is what one does when he is building this spiritual house. It is not

necessarily the one who says, "Lord, Lord"; it is the one who does the will of His Father in heaven. It is dependent on how you live. It is dependent on how you build your house.

So Jesus says, "Come. I will show you who is a wise man. I will show you the true Christian. I will liken him to a man who built his house on a rock. This is how he built. He heard what I said, and then he did what I said. It is that simple."

So let me tell you that it is very simple. But let me tell you this as well; it is very costly. Let us take, for instance, the matter of divorce and remarriage. You can preach against divorce and remarriage. You can say it is very, very bad. You can talk all you want, and as long as you sit and visit with such people or gather with them like with others, all you say will not cause much opposition. After all, you just both have a different opinion of the matter, and you may be wrong. You are not very sure because you do not take any stand on the matter.

But when you say it is wrong, and you view it as a sin that will exclude one from heaven just like it will exclude alcoholics or drug addicts, or prostitutes, or those into pornography, or liars, and on and on; and then you separate yourself from them if they profess to be Christians like the Bible says you should, now you will awaken hordes of demons.

When we say we are Christians and we have eternal life, we come under obligation to all of Scripture. So turn to 1 Corinthians 5. We begin in verse 9. Paul writes:

9 I wrote to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people.

10 Yet I certainly did not mean with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.

11 But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or

covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or an extortioner—not even to eat with such a person.

Most Christians are not familiar with these verses and there are others like this. And you can know all this and say you believe it and it is not a problem to anyone. But when you obey such a passage and tell some professing Christian, "I cannot eat with you or fellowship with you as long as you are living in this sin", now you will find opposition. It is not ultimately what you say you believe that affects others. It is when you act on what you believe that opposition arises in such cases.

You see, it is not knowing that such passages exist; it is doing what they say that determines whether you really believe the Bible. I can tell you that you can preach a lot of controversial things and be found acceptable. But I can tell you there are some Scriptures, if you obey them; if you do what they say, you will meet an enemy the size of Goliath. The apostle Paul said, "We wrestle not with flesh and blood." But I think that is all most Christians wrestle with.

Now verse 25 says of this first man's house:

25 *"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.*

When it speaks of this house falling, I think it speaks of the end of life. When the stormy processes of aging or sickness are finished with our physical house, it falls. But we are dealing here with the spiritual house. Of the wise man's house it says it did not fall. The meaning here, in my understanding is that when one is truly born again, and one obeys the Word of God, at the end of physical life, the spiritual life is not hindered at all.

Turn to John 11. In Bethany, close to Jerusalem, there lived a brother and two sisters. They were very close friends to Jesus. And one day the brother got sick,

and he did not recover. He died. Jesus was told that he was sick but He waited a while and then went to Bethany. By now this man had been dead for four days. We begin in verse 17:

17 *So when Jesus came, He found that he had already been in the tomb four days.*

18 *Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles away.*

19 *And many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to comfort them concerning their brother.*

20 *Then Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was coming, went and met Him, but Mary was sitting in the house.*

21 *Then Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if You had been here, my brother would not have died.*

22 *"But even now I know that whatever You ask of God, God will give You."*

23 *Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."*

24 *Martha said to Him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."*

25 *Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live.*

26 *"And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?"*

Jesus said, "He that lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?" Now a person only truly believes in Jesus if he hears God's Word and obeys it. If one does not obey it, one does not truly believe. And if one truly believes, when one dies, truly real life has only just begun. This is the Christian message.

3. The Foolish man

But let us look now at the foolish man. Let me read verses 26-27.

26 *"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:*

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

We note that this man too built a house. Like those who entered the broad road, he too is concerned for his spiritual life. But Jesus calls him a foolish man. Why? Because he thinks by knowing about the things of God he is a Christian and is going to heaven. You see, he is not like the rest of the world that has their false gods who do not care about the God of the Bible. This man cares about the things of the Bible. Jesus said that this man heard His sayings. He heard about eternal life. He heard it all. Many such people get baptized. They join a church. They think they are Christians.

Lloyd Jones says, "Finally, the 'false professor' also desires to get to heaven. He is a man who believes in heaven and hell, and he does not want to go to perdition. He very definitely desires to go to heaven. Have you not known such people? Many can be found outside the Church altogether. They most certainly want to go to heaven, and say that they have always believed in God. If that is true of the man obviously outside, how much more is it true of this nominal Christian who is inside the realm and sphere of Christian interest?" end quote.

Of the false prophet we saw in an earlier message, that he looked just like a true prophet. He had sheep's clothing. Paul says Satan's ministers are like angels of light. It looks good. They think they are good. They think they are truly born again Christians, but they are not. You see, if you were to look at the two houses these men are building you would not be able to tell the difference. The difference is not visible. Both houses look the

same. Like the true and false prophet of our passage, the difference does not lie in what you see.

So what does the difference in these two houses lie in? It lies in what they built on. It lies in the foundation. It lies in that which is not visible. You see, you can often not see the difference on the outside if someone is a true Christian. The false teachers had sheep's clothing. This is very deceptive. The problem is they are not only in churches that we obviously recognize as false, like Mormonism and so on. Many are in professing evangelical churches. A.W. Tozer said in his day that at most, only 10% of professing Christians were born again. He included his own denomination, the Christian Missionary and Alliance church.

In the people who walked on the broad and narrow road you could not tell the difference between the truly saved and the professors. You cannot tell the difference in these two houses in the things that happen to each house. The rains came on both. The floods came on both. The storms came on both. There was no difference there.

Take the things of this life. It rains on the just and on the unjust. The just get sick. The just are sometimes poor. The just experience death. The difficult things that befall those who enter the narrow gate befall those who enter the wide gate too. They face disease and death. Some leave father and mother to join a church. Some become missionaries and die on the field. With regard to the two houses before us this morning, the rains descend and floods come upon both houses. And because a person becomes a true Christian, that does not shield him or her from life's troubles. Even those who do not enter the narrow or wide gate experience a lot of sorrow and trials and difficulties.

Though it is not easy to spot the difference between the true and the false, yet it is very simple. It is just this. The true Christian hears and does and the

false Christian hears and does not live the life he or she professes.

So look at our verses:

26 *"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:*

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

Now we notice here that when the rain descended and the floods came, and the winds blew, eventually this house fell. We are talking here about a person's spiritual house. The wise man's house did not fall. When one hears the teachings of the Word of God and one does not do them, when this life is over, that which one trusted in for one's spiritual life collapses. Now there can be no more horrifying moment for anyone who has thought he or she was a Christian, than the moment such a person dies and wakes up in hell.

We are sometimes told, "Well, there will be many people in heaven we never thought would be there." There may be some truth to that, though I do not know a Scripture to confirm it. But there will be many who will not be there who thought they would be there. Jesus said in our passage, "Many will say, 'Lord, Lord; did we not do this and that? We did what we should do. How can we end up here?' And the Lord will say, 'I never knew you.'"

D. The Application

So we now ask, what does it mean to hear Jesus' sayings, and do them? Well, let me illustrate. I have a pain in my stomach and finally I go to the doctor. He runs the tests and when they come back he calls me in and says, "You have thus and such a medical condition." And then he explains how it works and that it is treatable and he tells you what you have to do. And then he says, this is how to fix it, it will be painful. It will

take quite some time but it is curable. So we want you to begin by taking this medication.

So you go home. You have been told how it is, but you have also been told about those who have fixed this condition naturally. You try that but it doesn't fix it for you. But then you hear of this doctor who has another cure where you don't have to go through the pain and so you go there. And now that doesn't help. And finally you go back to the doctor. He checks and says, "It's too late. We can't do anything for you now."

That is what it is like to hear and know about something and not do it. Sure there are all kinds of voices saying other things. Now we all have a spiritual condition that will take us to hell. There is a cure. It is painful. It is the removal of pride, and the sins it brings with it. And the way the Lord removes pride and makes man righteous in life is through repentance and faith. It all comes by grace because we don't earn anything with repentance nor with faith. We have to rely on the Lord.

You will know by those who said, "Lord, Lord", that they thought they were OK. That they had never truly repented is very clear because the Lord said, "I never knew you." So they could not truly live by faith because they had never truly repented or believed.

But look at the righteous now. Jesus said he hears my sayings and he does them. That is the answer to the Christian life. It is a choice everybody can and must make. God made man and angels with an incredible capacity, the capacity to choose. Animals don't have that choice. Right and wrong always lies before us as a choice.

-What sayings?

So Jesus said, "He who hears and does these sayings of mine." And so we ask, "What sayings?" He is speaking of Matthew 5-7 here. But we could say it applies to the whole Word of God. James says in 1:19-25:

19 So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath;

20 *for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.*

21 *Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*

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 observing his natural face in a mirror;*

24 *for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.*

25 *But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*

Well, let's look at just a few things within the sermon on the mount. The Sermon on the Mount begins with the gateway to salvation. The most crucial thing of all. We go to chapter 5:

1 *And seeing the multitudes, He went up on a mountain, and when He was seated His disciples came to Him.*

2 *Then 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.*

Here is the narrow gate. It begins with the poor in spirit and those who mourn. Blessed are those who go in here. Humility is the beginning of the narrow path. We go to 5:16:

5:16 *"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.*

Then look at 5:20:

20 *"For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.*

What was the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees? They were beautiful on the outside and like a grave where dead people were rotting on the inside. We go down to verses 23-24:

The Lord then goes on to dealing with a very common sin in verse 27:

27 *"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.'*

28 *"But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

29 *"If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.*

30 *"And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.*

We have never lived in an age when this sin was more rampant than today. You cannot go into a shopping mall, or often even a grocery store without running into severe temptation points. Certainly television and now much worse, the internet have made the sins mentioned here very common. So let me reread this: If your internet causes you to sin, cut it off! If your cell phone causes you to sin, cut it off! If facebook causes you to sin, cut it off!

31 *"Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'*

32 *"But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except fornication (not physical immorality) causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.*

How many hear this but disobey what Jesus said here?

CONCL: Well, we don't have time to go through the whole sermon to even briefly look at the sayings Jesus is talking about even in just the immediate context. We must conclude. But go through this sermon and you will find a lot of sayings to obey. And those who read and heed them will find their lives changing in many ways.

Now, in conclusion let me say this about these two houses. We are all building either one or the other. May I ask, which house are you building? If we hear the Word of God Sunday by Sunday and go home, and don't do what the Bible teaches, we are like the foolish man. If we hear the Word of God and live it, we are like the wise man.

When you read through the OT and then you come to this first great sermon by Jesus, you will notice what a change is being brought about. And the sayings in this sermon will be applicable, not only in Israel, but in the whole world. These parables, as I see them, are a transition from the OT and Israel, to the NT and the Church. Instead of working through one nation, after this transition, God will work in all the world.