

Heavenly Father, as we come before you this morning, we ask that you touch each and every person here this morning. We ask that you touch those who are in need, Lord, and give them peace, joy and comfort.

Lord, we know that nothing is hidden from your sight. You know our deepest needs even before we pray. You said we should ask, and Father, right now, we are asking.

I pray that you will free every burdened heart, and give them the peace that passes all understanding.

Help them to know that they can “cast all their cares” upon you. Bless this service today Lord as we continue to give you all the praise, honor, and glory, in your wonderful name we pray, Amen.

Matthew 7:24-27

²⁴ Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock:

²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock.

²⁶ And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand:

²⁷ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

BUILDING YOUR LIFE ON THE ROCK

As I was thinking about what to preach today, I began to remember all the rains and the floods a couple of years ago that devastated Eastern Kentucky.

As I pondered on that for a while, I began thinking about my home, and where it's located. There's no creeks around my home; no bodies of water that would cause devastation to where I live, and I thank God for that.

My heart went out to those people that were not as fortunate as me. But one thing I did NOT worry about that day was our house flooding. Our house is set in a safe place from any floods which might come against us.

It is good to have that kind of peace of mind about the security of your house. But I began to think about how it is even more important to be certain about your “spiritual house,” and the storms which might come against you spiritually.

And that is what Jesus talks about in this passage. As He brings this Sermon on the Mount to a close, He says there are two kinds of “spiritual houses” you can have: either a house built on the rock, or a house built on the sand.

He shows us the importance of having your house “built on the rock” spiritually — and He also teaches us exactly what that means.

One of the things we should notice in this passage is that the storms we see here, were the same for BOTH of these houses:

- — What does Jesus say in verse 25 happened to the house built on the sand? He says: **“The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew.”**
- — And what did He say in verse 27 happened to the house built on the rock?
- He said: **“The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew.”**

He tells us the SAME trials came to both of them:

1. BOTH of them had rain;
2. BOTH of them had floods,
3. and BOTH of them had winds.

So one of the things we should learn from this is

- that you are NOT somehow “exempt” from the trials of life if you build your house on the rock.
- It is NOT like: “OK, now that you are a Christian, nothing bad is going to happen to you.”
- Quite honestly, most of you have probably figured that out by now, right?
- As a Christian, you will still get sick;
- you will still have problems with your job or marriage or kids;
- you still have “rain and floods and wind.”

If you DON'T know this already, you need get it today:

- The message of Christianity is NOT “just ask Jesus into your heart” and everything will be smooth and easy from this day forward.
- That is not true, and you are setting yourself and others up for bitter disappointment if that is your message.
- It is not true. There is “rain and floods and wind” for EVERYONE in this life:
- those who build their life on the rock, as well as for those who build their life on the sand.
- The storms of life are common to us all.

THE DIFFERENCE IS NOT THAT YOU DON'T HAVE STORMS AS A CHRISTIAN; THE DIFFERENCE IS THAT AS A CHRISTIAN YOU HAVE A FOUNDATION THAT HOLDS YOU UP THROUGH THE STORMS!

— Being a Christian did not keep me from having a heart attack, or diabetes, or getting Covid 3 times.

- But, I have a real peace about it —
- I know God has a plan and a purpose in it —
- because my life has been built upon the rock.

— Being a Christian did not keep my sister and brother from dying unexpectedly.

- But I have an assurance that God was with them,
- and they have a home in heaven no matter what,
- because they had built their lives upon the ROCK!
- In the same way, being a follower of Jesus will not keep YOU from “rain and floods and winds” and all kinds of trials in your life — but when you DO experience those things,
- you will have a peace, and a strength,
- and you will STAND and not fall,
- if you have built your life upon the ROCK!

II. WHAT IS “THE HOUSE ON THE ROCK”?

But we’ve got to understand just what “building your life upon the rock” IS.

- It doesn’t mean what a lot of people THINK it means.

Many people think that “building your house on the rock” means saying that Jesus is your Rock.

- People say things like: “Jesus is my rock, so I am gonna stand and not fall.”
- Well, saying that Jesus is your “Rock” is a great confession of faith — but that is NOT what Jesus indicates here, that it means to build your life on the rock.
- In verses 21–23, Jesus said, **“NOT everyone who SAYS to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the Kingdom of Heaven.”**
- So just “SAYING” Jesus is your Lord is not “building your life on the rock.”
- So what DOES “building your life on the rock” mean?

We need to remember that this is a word picture that Jesus gives us here:

- He said in verse 24 that “everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts upon them may be COMPARED to a man who built his house upon the rock.”
- “Compared” — in other words, He’s saying, this is an illustration.
- And we don’t have to try to interpret the illustration.
- Because He specifically TELLS us what this means:

- He says the man who built his house on the rock, is an illustration of the person who “hears these words of Mine and ACTS upon them.”
- And He says the man who built his house on the sand is a picture of the man who “hears these words of Mine and does NOT act upon them.”

SO: BUILDING YOUR HOUSE ON THE ROCK MEANS DOING WHAT JESUS SAYS!

BUILDING YOUR HOUSE ON THE SAND MEANS NOT DOING WHAT JESUS SAYS.

The only difference here is DOING or NOT DOING what Jesus says!

I think this is important for a “church group” like we have here today to really get.

- Because there are a lot of people who come to church
- who think things like, “I’ve built MY house on the rock;
- I go to church every Sunday and I hear the word of the Lord!
- But you’ve got to understand: BOTH MEN IN THIS STORY HEARD JESUS’ WORDS!
- — The difference here was NOT that one man came and listened to Jesus and the other one didn’t.
- — The difference was NOT that one of them went to church and the other one didn’t.

No, Jesus says they both HEARD His words.

- They both might have gone to church.
- The difference is NOT that they didn’t both HEAR His words;
- the difference is that one heard and DID WHAT HE SAID,
- and the other also heard but did NOT do what He said.

THE TOTAL DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO MEN HERE IS THAT ONE DID, AND ONE DID NOT DO WHAT JESUS SAID WHEN THEY HEARD IT!

- “Building your life on the rock” means DOING what Jesus says!

So here at the end of the greatest sermon ever preached, the Sermon on the Mount,

- Jesus says THERE IS ONE THING YOU’VE GOT TO GET:
- merely “hearing” what I have just said in this message is not enough;
- you’ve got to DO IT!

I think it is very interesting in light of this, that the last verses of Matthew 7 say:

- “When Jesus had finished these words,
- the crowds were amazed at His teaching;
- for He was teaching them as One who had authority,
- and not as their scribes.”

You can just picture people leaving the Sermon on the Mount, and going out and telling people:

- “You should hear this Jesus;
- He’s not like our boring rabbis;
- He is an amazing teacher;
- He has the greatest stories; He has the best illustrations;
- He really makes you think.”

And they could go away thinking they had really responded to Jesus’ message, when Jesus says in fact they did NOT —

- because He said the one who “builds his life on the rock”

- is not the one who hears His words and thinks they are really neat;
- the one who “builds his life on the rock” is the one who hears Jesus’ words and DOES them!

James 1:22-25 says “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”

- How is a person who hears the word “deceiving himself”?
- Because the one who hears the word often thinks they have done what they are supposed to do,
- because they just listened to it;
- when the truth is, that is not enough. You have to DO IT!

This gets right to the heart of it for a lot of people.

- How many of us here in church today, walk out of services each week feeling really good about ourselves,
- because we were at church to hear the sermon?
- And we think we’re good Christians — because we were “in church.”
- We heard the word. But Jesus tells us plainly here:
- That is not enough. That will not make a difference for your life.
- It is not enough for you to HEAR His word; you have to DO IT!

Our salvation is not based on what we do.

- We are saved by grace alone, through faith alone,
- in Jesus Christ’s work on the cross alone.
- But if you are saved by God’s grace alone,
- you will show the fruit of it by DOING what He says.
- You won’t just listen to it; you won’t just read it;
- you will DO IT. Very simply put: the person who “builds their life on the rock” is the person who DOES what Jesus says!

III. HOW TO BUILD YOUR HOUSE ON THE ROCK

So how do we do this? What do we “build our life on the rock” by doing what Jesus said?

Well, when Jesus was walking on earth and teaching, “building your life on the rock” meant if He told His disciples to do something, they would do it:

— When He told Matthew to leave his tax office and follow Him, “building his life on the rock” meant getting up and leaving his office and following.

— When He told the disciples to take the loaves and fish out to the multitude, “building their life on the rock” meant getting the baskets and taking the bread out. They just did what He told them to do.

But things are different today.

- Jesus is NOT physically present with us, giving us His commands —
- but He HAS given us His commands in His word.
- So we can still “build our house on the rock” by DOING what Jesus tells us in His word, as we read it and hear it taught.

Are you doing something about what God shows you in His word? Are you doing what He says to you through these messages we share on Sunday morning? I have to admit; I enjoy it when people tell me after the service that the message was good; every pastor wants to hear that. But the most encouraging thing of all is when someone tells me that they are DOING what I preach or teach about.

- DO what you hear in these messages.
- DO what you hear in Sunday School.
- DO what we study in our bible studies.
- DO what we're singing about in these songs

THAT is real success as a church.

And that leads me to this:

- So many things have happened in this church over the past year.
- Some of you have lost family and friends.
- We have gained new faces.
- Members have fallen away, friendships have been damaged or lost,
- even death has paid a visit to one of us, brother Lonnie.
- But, through it all, our church is still standing.
- Through all that has happened, the doors of this church are still open.

Friends, we have to understand something.....

- Things change. People change.
- People come and go. Time moves on.
- But in God's will, there is a reason for everything.
- Sometimes we may not want to agree with God,
- and sometimes we may not understand God,

- but God is always in control.

We have to understand during this time that the life of our church marches on.

Now, I often hear people say, “I love my church.

- It’s a place where anyone can feel welcome.”
- I think I know what they mean, and I’m glad for their enthusiasm.
- But I want to point out that their church technically isn’t a *place*. It’s the people.
- So, maybe they mean the people are welcoming.
- I hope that’s what they mean.
- Because a church certainly isn’t a place or a person or a building.

It’s also common to hear parents tell their children, “If you don’t hurry up, you’re going to make us late for church.”

- Again, I think I know what they mean.
- But I do wonder if they think of their church as an *event* to go to instead of a group of people to gather with.
- Certainly the look and feel of many church services—
- with their fog machines, and expensive light setups—
- communicate that what happens on Sunday mornings is one big show.
- But Jesus didn’t die to create the greatest show on earth.
- He died to rescue a ruined group of people.

We have to understand that

- This church is not limited to one man or one woman.
- This church is not about a show, it's about Jesus.
- This church is made up of every member who places their faith in Jesus Christ.

We need to follow Jesus, and make sure our lives are built upon the rock.

- Jesus is the head of this church, and He is the leader of this church.
- Over, and over again, I am going to keep reminding you of these truths:
- Jesus is alive
- Jesus is in control
- Jesus loves our church
- God is involved in our situation
- God will work things out here at Clay County First Church of God.
- God has good plans for you, for me, and for this church

I want this church to be a place where sick people can find healing.

I want this church to be a place where the lost can come to be found.

I want this church to be a place for the lost and losers, the hurting and bleeding, the walking or crawling or carried-on-a-stretcher wounded.

I want this church to be a place where the down and out, forgotten people are bathed and robed as sons and daughters of the King.

I want this church to be a place where people can come and experience the love of Jesus and share that love with others.

Listen, our goal as a church is NOT just to get more people coming (though I am glad when more people come);

Our goal is NOT just to get more new members (though I am very grateful to God when we get new members);

Our ultimate aim is not just to gather greater numbers of people who “enjoy” hearing words in sermons which they have no intention of applying to their lives!

A CHURCH THAT GATHERS CROWDS OF PEOPLE WHO HEAR THE WORD BUT DON'T DO IT IS GOING TO BE LIKE A HOUSE THAT IS BUILT ON THE SAND! It will not stand the storms that come against it.

And in the same way, IF YOUR PERSONAL LIFE IS JUST HEARING GOD'S WORD AND NOT DOING IT, THEN YOUR LIFE IS BUILT ON THE SAND.

— Are you DOING what you hear in these messages?

— Are you DOING what you read in the Bible every day?

Every one of us should ask ourselves the question today: “Am I really building my life on the rock by DOING what Jesus said?”

CLOSING

Let's get specific: when is the last time you purposefully CHANGED something in your life, and did something different than you were going to do, because of what you read or heard in the word of God?

— When was the last time somebody did or said something offensive to you, and you were really going to “let ‘em have it” — but you read what God's word said in Proverbs, “A gentle answer turns away wrath,” so you didn't do it?

— Or when was the last time you prayed differently because God's word directed you in how to pray for someone in a very specific way?

— When was the last time you didn't “feel” like forgiving someone, but you did because you read that Jesus commanded you to, and that He will only forgive you like you forgive others?

— Or when was the last time you didn't watch a tv show or look at a certain website, because you read where Psalm 101:3 says “I will set no worthless thing before my eyes”?

When was the last time you changed something in your life, or that you did something differently than you were going to do, because of what you had read or heard from God's word?

If you have difficulty coming up with something, you are in trouble. What do you think are you doing?

You're just coming here to church and sitting and listening and walking out and living the same way you were before you came in.

— If that is what you are thinking, or that's what you're doing, when it's all said and done, when you stand before God on judgment day, you're going to be in trouble.

— do you think that is “Christianity”? Because it ISN'T! James 1 says you are “deceiving yourself” if you are living like that and thinking you are a Christian!

Jesus said real Christianity — “building your life on the rock” — is not about just “hearing” His word; it is about DOING what His word says.