

Building a Storm-Proof Life

Series: Built to Last

Matthew 7:24-27

Take your Bibles and go with me to Matthew Chapter 7.

ILLUSTRATION: If you've ever seen a car commercial, you'll notice that every make or model has a slogan. You never hear about the specs...

Nissan- Life is a journey, enjoy the ride;

Toyota- Moving forward;

Chevrolet- baseball, hot dogs, apple pie and Chevrolet;

Dodge-Grab life by the horns;

Ford. Designed for living. Engineered to last; Built Ford Tough!

In the late 1990s, Ford Motor Company launched a campaign with a bold new slogan: "**Built to Last.**" It wasn't flashy - it was rugged. Whether you were hauling lumber, towing a boat, or loading up the kids, Ford wanted you to believe that their trucks, cars, and SUV's would go the distance and that when life got rough, they wouldn't fall apart.

The campaign worked, because let's be honest, that's what we all want, right? Something that lasts.

-We want our marriages to last.

-We want our kids to walk in truth.

-We want our work to matter,

-Our legacy to outlive us,

-And our faith to hold up when life comes apart at the seams.

And yet, maybe you've already figured this out: life doesn't always feel as solid as you thought.

You're doing your best to build something meaningful, but you're not sure what you've built can withstand pressure.

Over the next few weeks, we will learn how to build our lives - not on shifting sand, but on the rock-solid, unshakable, unchanging, eternal truth of Jesus Christ.

Today, we're beginning where Jesus ends His most famous message - the Sermon on the Mount.

Listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 7:24-27, " **24 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."**

Let's Pray

For three chapters - Matthew 5, 6, & 7 - Jesus has been showing us what Kingdom life looks like.

- Not an easy life, but a blessed life.
- Not the religious life, but a righteous life.
- Not the superficial, but the supernatural.

He's talked about the kind of people God blesses - those who are:

- Poor in spirit
- Meek
- Pure in heart
- Peacemakers

He's warned about:

-false righteousness,

-false treasure

-and false teachers.

All through the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus describes the life of blessing. He talks about what it looks like. Then at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives a series of pictures, and every one of them involves a stark contrast designed to force people to choose:

There is a narrow gate or there is a wide gate. No third gate.

There is a narrow road and a broad road. No third road.

There is a good tree and a bad tree. No third tree.

House built on the rock; house built on the sand. No third house.

Why? Because hearing alone isn't enough. What matters is what you do with what you hear.

That's why James 1:22 says, ***“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.” [NIV]***

QUOTE: Adrian Rogers, "Do you know what's wrong with some folks? They have a notebook full of sermons and feel so good about their knowledge. But they have no intention of obeying what they hear. They become hearers of the Word without becoming doers."

You can hear the greatest sermon ever preached...You can quote it...Study it...Admire it. But if you don't obey it - you're building on sand.

That's what Jesus is saying in this parable.

ILLUSTRATION: The Leaning Tower of Pisa is one of the most famous buildings in the world - not because of what it achieved, but because of what went wrong. It was supposed to be a great, big, grand bell tower. But by the time the builders reached the third story, the tower had started to tilt.

Why? Poor construction? Cheap materials? No - it was built on soft, shifting, unstable soil. And the foundation was only 10 feet deep.

The same is true in life. You might be working hard to build something impressive, but if it's not built on the Rock, it won't last.

Let's look at this story in Matthew 7 and ask: **"What am I building my life on?"**

Notice the first thing that this parable teaches.

1. Every Life Has a Builder.

Most people either miss this point or take it for granted but look at verse 24.

Matthew 7:24, ***"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them..."***

Stop there for a minute. Jesus begins this final parable with the word ***"Therefore..."*** That word connects what Jesus is about to say with everything He's already said. It links all He taught in the Sermon on the Mount to a call for action.

He's not just giving out new information - He's calling for transformation.

And this is important: Jesus doesn't contrast BELIEVERS vs. UNBELIEVERS or SAINTS vs. SINNERS. He contrasts two listeners. Both hear the same message; but only one is called "wise."

Knowledge vs Wisdom

Knowledge involves the accumulation of information, facts, and understanding about the world, about God's Word, and about the principles by which life operates. In Scripture, the term often refers to learning that enables a person to discern truths or recognize what is correct or incorrect. Proverbs 1:7 states, ***"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline."*** 1 Corinthians 8:1: ***"Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up..."***

Proverbs 9:10 highlights the source of true wisdom: ***"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."***

"Knowledge is knowing that a tomato is a fruit. Wisdom is not putting it in a fruit salad," Miles Kington

James 3:17 says: ***"But the wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peace-loving, gentle, accommodating, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial, and sincere."***

Key Distinctions Between Knowledge and Wisdom

1. Information vs. Application

Knowledge gathers information—dates, facts, principles. Wisdom, however, takes those facts and applies them in a God-centered manner, directing choices and influencing behavior for righteous ends.

2. Potential for Pride vs. Humble Submission

Knowledge without humility can result in arrogance. By contrast, wisdom recognizes that human understanding is finite and submits to God's infinite counsel. Proverbs 3:7 warns, ***"Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and turn away from evil."***

Scripture continually invites believers to seek wisdom first and foremost from God. James 1:5 assures, ***"Now if any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him."***

Just so you know, wisdom in the Bible isn't about having a high IQ; it's not about having a clever answer or even being able to quote Scripture. Biblical wisdom is obedience. It's doing what God says, not just nodding in agreement.

Obedience isn't glamorous, but it anchors us when everything else falls apart.

That's why the wise man and the wise woman build with the future in mind.

-They dig down, prepare, and obey.

Everyone in this room is building a life. No exceptions.

-Every attitude you adopt, every habit you form, with every decision you make, you're building a life.

The question isn't, "Am I building?" The question is, "What am I building?" And even more than that - "What is the foundation I'm building on?"

You may be building – Achievements...Popularity...Comfort...Even religious activity.

But unless the foundation is obedience to Jesus, you're building something that won't last.

ILLUSTRATION: In 2018, NBC News reported on a luxury skyscraper complex in Shenzhen, China, that made international headlines. Just a few years after the construction was completed, the buildings began to tilt and crack - and the engineers discovered that the towers were built on shallow piles, not a deep foundation.

The result? There were cracks on the floors, residents fleeing in fear, and millions in damage. Why? Not because the materials were inferior. Not because the design was flawed. But because they skipped building a solid foundation.

-It looked beautiful...It was full of potential...But it was never going to last.

Jesus tells us that both houses - the wise and the foolish - stood for a time. But eventually, something came that put the structure to the test.

The second next thing this parable teaches...

2. Every Life Faces Storms

Look in verses 25 & 27.

Matthew 7:25 ***"...and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house..."*** (just in case you missed it, He says it again in verse 27...) ***and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house..."***

Pay attention to the language Jesus uses: Rain...Floods...Winds...Beating on that house. (We know something about that after Helene. They are still recovering)

Jesus is saying this isn't a passing shower or a light drizzle. This is Category 5.

- Rain from above - Emotional or spiritual weariness.
- Floods from beneath - Financial pressure, family breakdown.
- Winds from the side - Criticism, conflict, health issues.

Jesus isn't just giving a weather report - He's showing us what life looks like in a broken world.

And what He makes clear is this: The storm hits both houses.

- The obedient and the disobedient.
- The faithful and the unfaithful.
- The wise and the foolish.

Did you catch that? Jesus didn't say, "If the storm comes." He said, "When the storm came."

Being a Christian doesn't mean you will avoid storms. It means you can outlast them.

Following Jesus doesn't keep the storms away. It keeps your life from falling apart when they come.

We often think, "If I just follow Jesus, life will get easier." That's not what Jesus says here. Jesus is teaching: If you follow Him, you'll be ready when it gets harder.

EXAMPLE: Have you ever noticed all the commercials from companies like Patriot Supply: emergency food kits, generators, water purifiers. They tell you, "The storms are coming! The grid could fail! You need to be ready!"

And a lot of folks hear those ads. Some even think, "I probably should do something about that." But they never do.

Then, when the storm hits and the lights go out, and the power is off for days, you realize that hearing the warning wasn't enough. Thinking about it wasn't enough. You had to do something.

It's the same way spiritually. Hearing Jesus' words is good - but if you don't act on them, you're just as unprepared when the storms of life come as you would have been if you'd never heard them.

Obedience to Jesus doesn't remove the storm - it reveals your readiness for it.

Jesus is saying. "The storms are coming. But if your life is anchored to the truth; if your foundation is solid - you can stand."

So, Jesus describes two builders, two storms - but then comes the real contrast. Not in the weather. Not in construction. But in the outcome. Because eventually...

3. Every Life Exposes Its Foundation

Here's what Jesus says about the Wise Man's house in Matthew 7:25, ***"...and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock."***

And in Matthew 7:27, He says about the Foolish Man's house, "...and it fell. And great was its fall."

Most people think this parable is about construction. It's not. It's about location. At first glance, these two houses may have looked identical.

Same roof...Same siding...Same square footage...Same neighborhood

Both builders probably bought supplies at the same store. Both builders probably used the same wood, nails, and caulk.

But in the end, the difference wasn't in the walls - it was in the ground beneath them.

What nobody could see - until the storm hit - was the one thing that made all the difference: the foundation.

Jesus doesn't contrast the structure of the house. He points to the soil underneath it. One house was founded on ***the rock - hearing, believing, and obeying the Word of God.*** The other was built on ***shifting sand - hearing without doing.***

And when the storm hit, one stood, and one collapsed. Jesus even adds this haunting phrase: **"Great was its fall."**

Not just tragic but devastating. It was a complete and total foundation failure.

What you build your life on will eventually be revealed.

You can't tell what someone's built on when the sun shines and things are going great. But, when the storm hits - when the job is lost, when the doctor calls, when the relationship breaks down - that's when the foundation is revealed.

What are you really trusting in? What's underneath your life when everything else is stripped away?

Your education?

Your family background?

Your income?

Your own self-confidence?

Or the finished work of Jesus Christ?

Time exposes what talent hides; storms reveal what personal strength covers.

CONCLUSION

Let's go back to where we started.

Ford said, "Built to Last." But we all know that no truck, tower, or treasure lasts forever. You don't have to keep building on sand. You don't have to wait for the next storm to tear everything down. You can build on the Rock - today!

Let me ask you: Is Jesus Christ the foundation of your life?

-Not your parent's faith.

-Not your church attendance.

-Not your religious feelings or works.

Have you ever come to Jesus in repentance and faith? Saying, "Lord, I want You to be the foundation of my life - my Savior, my Lord, my Rock."

If not, this is your moment. Don't walk out of here, hoping your foundation will hold. Don't patch the cracks. Don't rearrange the furniture. Come to Jesus.

At the cross, all the winds of God's judgment and the waves of His wrath beat on Jesus – so you could stand forever.

1 Corinthians 3:11, "**For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**"

If you're already saved.

Have you let culture shift your foundation?

Have you been building comfort instead of obedience?

Are there places in your life where you've been listening, but not doing?

If so, today's the time to rebuild.

Listen, when the storms come, only one thing will matter:

Was your life built on the Rock of Jesus Christ?

Illustration: Eleven miles off the east coast of Scotland, in the North Sea, stands the Bell Rock Lighthouse. It has endured the ferocious onslaught of the North Sea's violent storms since 1811. It rests upon less than one acre of solid rock. That small reef is covered by seawater for 20 hours of every day. The builder of the lighthouse, Robert Stevenson and his band of 65 skilled artisans had only four hours each day to chink away the stone and gouge a foundation in the rock. As a result of this painstaking patient work, the 115-foot-tall lighthouse is still in use today, almost 200 years later.

Thank God, we can build our lives upon the Chief Cornerstone of Jesus Christ and the foundation of the apostles. Let the rain fall, the winds blow, and the storms come, but life rooted and grounded on the proper foundation will withstand the rains and the wind.

Continue to build your life on Jesus or start doing so today:

To the architect, He is the Chief Cornerstone.

To the artist, He is the Altogether Lovely One.

To the astronomer, He is the Bright/Morning Star.

To the baker, He is the Living Bread.

To the banker, He is the Priceless Possession.

To the biologist, He is the Creator.

To the carpenter, He is the Master Builder.

To the diplomat, He is the Prince of Peace.

To the doctor, He is the Great Physician.

To the educator, He is the Sum of All Truth.

To the electrician, He is the Light of the World.

To the farmer, He is the Lord of the Harvest.

To the florist, He is the Rose of Sharon and the Lily of the Valley.

To the geologist, He is the Rock of Ages.

To the horticulturist, He is the True Vine.

To the jeweler, He is the Pearl of Great Price.

To the judge, He is the Advocate with the Father.

To the philosopher, He is the Wisdom of God.

To the plumber, He is the Living Water.

To the publisher, He is the Good Tidings of Great Joy

To the sculptor, He is the Living Stone.

To the sinner, He is the LAMB OF GOD THAT TAKES AWAY THE SIN OF THE WORLD!