



## **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 fool-

ish 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.”

## **Reflection**

Today we read the final words of the Sermon on the Mount. It's a story of two people, two houses and two foundations. And the big challenge given to each of us is to honestly assess what we are building our lives upon.

I love the way that Jesus engages us with story. With metaphor. There is so much to explore, even in a simple story like this one.

Jesus identifies two types of people, both build houses. And in this context, I take it that building a house is Jesus' way of referring to the lives we live. It's interesting isn't it that Jesus likens our lives to building a house? I like this image he gives us.

Life is active, it is designed to reflect God in his creative endeavour. Just as God acted and created this world, he gives us life and calls us to continue his creation. To rule and subdue the world we've been given. In many respects, life is a building project. Building friendships, building family, building careers, building our sense of right and wrong, building our reputations, building our church, building our own knowledge and love of God. Life is a building project. We weren't designed to sit on a couch in an empty room, staring at the wall. We

were called to be active with the lives and the world God has given us.

Regardless of what we build, Jesus is clear that there is one thing we will all have in common. Did you pick it up? Storms. We'll all face storms. That is the given in this story. The rain falls, the rivers rise, the winds blow and the house gets smashed. Both houses.

It seems that Jesus takes it as a given that crisis, stress and difficulty are part of this broken world we live in. Earlier in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus seems pretty matter a fact about the reality that standing up for him and his words will lead to persecution. No doubt he has that in mind here, but this story also seems to have a broader feel as well. You see both houses,

both approaches to life will face storms. Both will face those unexpected moments, those health scares, those unpaid bills, those broken relationships, those battles with anxiety, those struggles with addiction, the loss of loved ones and those seasons of loneliness. Storms, rising water levels, wind and rain. Some of us can spend a life time trying desperately to escape these storms. To try and control our lives in such a way that we have every base covered, so that we will not get battered by our broken world. But this is ultimately a failed venture, for we can't control everything.

At some point, the storms will come. The point of this story from Jesus though is not how to escape the storms. The point of this story, (given at the close of the Sermon on

the Mount), is this: what is the foundation that your house is built on? That's the ultimate question from Jesus. What is the bedrock of your life? What is your stabilizing centre?

In terms of our options, Jesus couldn't be any more clearer, could he? 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. 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. While the shape of our house matters, the million dollar question is: what foundation is it built on?

For the past seven weeks we have been reading and reflecting on the words of Je-

Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount. Ultimately a sermon about the shape and culture of God's Kingdom. Who is really blessed? What really matters? What should capture our hearts and shape our minds. And now as the teaching wraps up we see that Jesus has not shared these words simply to sound spiritual or gain a following.

He has shared this picture of the kingdom of God with us because it is the only thing that will stand us up through the storms that will inevitably come our way in life. It is out of love, not self-promotion that Jesus has revealed this new life to us.

But the question remains: what does it mean to hear these words and put them into practice? What does it mean to find in Jesus our foundation, our solid rock?

In the past 2 chapters of Matthew's Gospel, Jesus has spoken of a life that has been completely turned around by the kingdom of God. But he has given us these words knowing that ultimately he was the one who would open up the way for us to be a part of this kingdom. For as we continue through the Gospel of Matthew we will see that it is Jesus himself who will face the greatest storm. It is Jesus himself who will deal with the storm that comes as a result of our own sin and our brokenness. The greatest storm was to hit as he hung upon that cross.

To hear Jesus words and put them into practice is first to realise that Jesus himself is the only one worthy of God's eternal kingdom. But, as the apostle Paul wrote in Romans 3, it is Christ's righteousness



that is given to us by God through faith. To build our lives upon Jesus means accepting the gift of forgiveness, righteousness and eternal life that come through him. And then allowing him to shape our lives, our motivations and our directions.

## **Think**

Why not take time today to consider what your life may look like if you truly trusted in Jesus' work and words on your behalf. For if Jesus has indeed paid the price for our sin and has opened the way into God's eternal kingdom then it means you can stop living each day as if you have to prove yourself. You can stop living each day as if you have to win at every endeavour. You can stop trying each day to build your own foundation which will not stand

the test of time and struggles that life will ultimately bring.

Instead you can live this day knowing that through Christ you have already won and nothing else needs to be proved. His righteousness is yours. His resurrection is yours. His Spirit is yours. This is the first and foundational step that sets us free to love and hope and pray like Jesus has called us to in the Sermon on the Mount.

The one who hears these words of Jesus and puts them into practice is like a wise person who has built their house on the rock. The one who hears these words of Jesus and does not put them into practice is a foolish person who has built their house on the sand.

Only one will survive the storms, and Jesus urges us this day to let him be that foundation for us.

## **Pray**

Here's a prayer you might like to pray this morning. 'Dear Lord and Father, thank you that through your son Jesus we have a foundation that is secure and eternal. Thank you for the task you have given us to build; to love our lives in active engagement with the world and the people you have given us. Help us this day to live this life knowing that you have already won our salvation and our eternity. Help us this day to know we have nothing else to prove. Help us this day to loosen our grip on the need to control and in doing so allow ourselves the freedom to love others

who you place in our path today. In Jesus name. Amen.