

+ Matthew 7:24-29 + What Kind of Foundation Do You Have? +
+ 2nd Sunday after Pentecost + 22 June 2014 +

When you came to church this morning, you probably didn't think you were coming for a home inspection. You came to attend Bible study or Sunday School. You came to attend worship. Perhaps you came to see your friends in the faith or spend time in prayer. Today, however, we go along with Jesus for two home inspections, but what you're going to see may shake you to the very foundation of your soul as you take a closer look at your life and on what your life is built.

You'll see two men building houses. You'll see they have the same tools and the same materials. They even face the same tests of time and weather, but as much as they are alike, they are also completely different.

You might ask, "What does building a home have to do with my life?" Well, our Lord wants you to pause and take a look at how firmly you stand. He wants you to take a closer look at the foundation on which your spiritual home is built. Is it built on the sinking sand of false teaching or human opinion or self-centered thinking, or is it built on the bedrock of Christ and his Word? **WHAT KIND OF FOUNDATION DO YOU HAVE?** It's time to put your hard hat on and follow Jesus on his inspection tour.

It's a warm, sunny day when Jesus takes us to the first house. You can already see it's built well. It's made of brick and stone. You have to climb a low rocky rise to get there, but as you near the house, you notice that the builder went deeper than just the topsoil. As Jesus takes you down into the basement, you can even see that the bedrock was dug out before one brick was laid. Jesus looks at it with satisfaction. "Nothing's going to happen to this house, because I gave it a firm foundation."

Then Jesus leads us from the house on the rock towards a dried-out gully some distance away. As you near the second house, you notice how the hard, sandy dirt breaks up under your boots. The house looks just like the house on the rock. It seems to be well-built, but something is different. When you enter the house, you notice that the owner didn't dig much of a foundation. In fact, it appears that the owner didn't even bother to lay down a slab of concrete, let alone a well-dug basement. When warned about his lack of a foundation, the owner confidently tells you, "What could possibly happen?"

Fast forward a couple months. It's not so warm and sunny anymore. The rains come down so quickly that the once bone-dry gully has become a rushing torrent wiping out everything in its path. As the storm moves, destructive winds blow fiercely through the valley knocking down trees as the waters continue to rise. Soon waves crash against the sides of the houses threatening to wash them away. One owner watches in horror as the storm wails away at his home and eats away at the sand around the base of his house. Soon with a loud crash, the house disappears in the waves with its owner never seen again. The other owner, whose home was built on bedrock, watches with wonder as the storm beats against his home, but like Jesus said, "Nothing's going to happen."

What kind of foundation do you have? On what is your "home"—your earthly life—built? From the outside, our "homes" all look alike. They appear to be built well, but what's holding them up? When you take a look at your foundation do you find it shaky, uncertain, or weak? Do you find your earthly life is built on the weak foundation of how hard a worker, how good a parent or how fine a student you are? Do you find it built on the uncertain ground of false teaching or self-centered thinking as you subtly try to prove to God how good of a Christian you are because you come to worship regularly and always help out around here? Do you find it's built on the shaky sand of the material things you own or on ever changing human opinion? We live in a world where we're constantly tempted to build our lives on appearance or stuff or opinion. It's easy to build your "home" on the shifting sand of your own strength, intelligence, ability, or personal piety. Such poor construction happens when you don't listen to God's Word, when you ignore how God condemns your home because of its corrupt foundation of sin. Jesus warns, ***"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."***

So what happens when the storms of this life wash the sand away? What happens when image, strength, or stuff fail you? What happens when you're faced with illness or crisis or guilt or death and everything you held dear passes away? If your life is built on a weak foundation, the floods of God's judgment will sweep you away to eternal condemnation.

How awful if all you can look forward to is ultimate destruction under God's judgment, but that's where Christ comes in. How can you survive the storms of this life and the floods of God's judgment? You can survive only if Christ is your foundation. Jesus proved himself to be your solid rock when he stood perfectly firm against all

the storms and attacks that Satan and the sinful world could throw at him because he alone could withstand such fury. Jesus proved himself to be your firm foundation when he bore the full weight of all your sins on the cross because he alone could bear that burden. Jesus proved himself to be your sure foundation against even the furious storms of death, when he conquered death on Easter morning.

Jesus becomes your foundation of bedrock when he sends his Holy Spirit to anchor you in him by faith. Through the work of his Spirit, your “home” gets a new foundation in Christ, so you can sing with King David, **“My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.”** (Psalm 62:1-2)

With our lives anchored in Christ, the storms of this life really can do nothing. Yes, strength and intelligence can fail. Material possessions and people and appearance can pass away. The rains may come down. The streams may rise. The winds may blow and beat against you, but you will not fall, because Christ is your firm foundation. You need not fear the storms of God’s judgment, because God’s judgment has already beaten and battered Christ on the cross for your sin.

Once Christ has become your firm foundation, it’s time to build or rebuild your “home”. Jesus provides the tools for that project too. The Lord gives you the most amazing tool ever made—his Word. That Word is a light that offers clarity for your life. That **“Word is a lamp to your feet and a light for your path.”** (Psalm 119:105) It’s the sharpest power tool ever made, **“sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow...”** (Hebrews 4:12) It always accomplishes what Christ desires. It **“will not return to him empty, but will...achieve the purpose for which he sent it.”** (Isaiah 55:11) It guides. It cuts. It comforts. It tells you exactly what you need to hear no matter the situation. Most importantly, it tells you why you so desperately need Jesus. **“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”** (2 Corinthians 5:21) Amazing, isn’t it?

The only way you can use that tool, however, is if you get into God’s Word. That begs a couple questions. Is one hour a week in worship all you need? If you come to Bible study or Sunday School, is one hour of that enough?

No! The storms of life still rage. Sin still daily threatens to ruin your “home” and your foundation. When you come home from Bible study and worship, you can’t just put your Bible up on the shelf to collect dust until you really need it. No, you need to use the tools Christ has given you every day. You need to daily use that amazing tool of God’s Word. Through personal Bible reading, family devotions, adult Bible Study, Confirmation Class, Sunday School, Vacation Bible School, and weekly worship, we dig into God’s Word and make it part of the very framework of our lives, part of the very air we breathe. With God’s holy Law, it tears down the parts of your “home” that has been rotting with sin and guilt. With God’s forgiveness, he resets you on the solid foundation of Christ and continues to build you up each day. Is that something you can neglect? If not, then why would you let it gather dust?

Christ also gives us two other tools. In Holy Baptism, the Lord actually transformed you from being condemned to being holy through the washing away of all your sins. Then each day God uses that tool to remind you that you are a child of God. With the Holy Supper, Jesus restores you with his forgiveness. He reassures you that in him, you will live no matter what storms you may face. With all these amazing tools, our Savior repairs and renovates our spiritual “homes” until finally it’s time for us to move into the everlasting mansions of heaven that he has been preparing for us.

Nevertheless, there are countless other people out there who have weak foundations or no foundation at all—people we know and love. Jesus encourages us, then, to **“go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation...”** (Mark 16:15) When you share that super tool of God’s Word with a friend or neighbor whose spiritual home is in danger of crumbling, Jesus gives them a new foundation just like yours. When you serve others out of love for Christ, when you invite your friends and neighbors to hear about the Savior, when you share with a friend the one message they need to hear the most—that Jesus died for them and took away all their sins, Christ gives them the firm foundation they need and renovates their “home” just like yours.

We go back to our original question. What kind of foundation do you have? Only when your life is built firmly on Christ and his Word can you weather the storms of this life and the floods of God’s judgment. Christ has become your firm foundation. He gives you the best tools to keep building, and he encourages you to share them with everyone who needs them. With that, you and I can boldly confess with the hymnwriter: **“My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus’ blood and righteousness; I dare to make no other claim but wholly**

lean on Jesus' name. On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand. (Christian Worship 382:1) Amen.