

BUILDING OUR FAITH TO WITHSTAND THE STORMS OF LIFE

1. 2011 was quite a year for natural disasters in the state of Alabama.
 - a. There were killer tornadoes, there were devastating rains and hurricanes which impacted the lives of so many people
2. Such disasters proved to reveal much about contractors.
 - a. We learned that some builders of homes and store buildings were unscrupulous
 - b. There were those who failed to build according to the codes which were set to meet safety standards for such storms
3. Jesus made a parallel between storms and how people built their homes near the end of His sermon on the mount!

Matthew 7:24-27

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

- a. He did this in an effort to encourage people to act upon His teachings
 - b. In so doing He contrasted the difference between those who were doers and those who were just hearers
4. In this lesson, I wish to address the following questions
 - a. What do the "houses" of the wise and foolish builders represent?
 - b. What "storms" is Jesus talking about?
 - c. How can we "build" so as to be able to withstand the storms?
 5. Let's begin by identifying the "houses"

I. I BELIEVE THE HOUSES REPRESENT OUR LIVES

A. BECAUSE EACH OF US ARE BUILDING A "LIFE"

1. Hopefully we are building a life that will eventually face and overcome the destructive forces of life
2. In all of our lives there will be many ups and downs that come our way

B. LIKE A HOUSE, WE MUST BUILD OUR "LIVES" UPON A FOUNDATION THAT WILL STAND UP TO THESE STORMS

1. The foundation of our lives is built on whatever teaching, doctrine, or philosophy to which we subscribe
2. It may be a philosophy or doctrine adopted from others, or one we developed ourselves
3. We cannot escape the fact that we are "builders."
 - a. The question is whether we will be a wise or foolish builder
 - b. How we handle test from the storms we face will determine the strength of the foundation of our life!

II. THESE STORMS ARE THINGS WHICH THREATEN OUR WELL-BEING

A. THIS MAY INVOLVE LITERAL STORMS

1. Such as tornadoes, hurricanes, floods, etc.
2. Which may take away all we own, perhaps even our loved ones
3. How we respond to such tragedies will reveal the quality of our "building"
 - a. Will we be emotionally devastated, or will we be able to stand strong, able to continue on without despair?

B. THESE TEST MAY INVOLVE FIGURATIVE STORMS

1. Such as illness, loss of loved ones, financial setbacks
2. Which may take away our health, family or physical possessions
3. Again, how we respond to these tragedies will reveal the quality of the foundation on which we build
 - a. Again, will we be emotionally devastated or will we be able to stand strong, able to continue on without despair?

C. THEN THERE IS THE FINAL AND MOST IMPORTANT "STORM" OF LIFE

1. That of death and the day of Judgment

Hebrews 9:27

"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,"

Romans 2:4-6

"Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who "will render to each one according to his deeds"

2. This will be the truest test of our "building", or character

2 Corinthians 5:10-11

"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men; but we are well known to God, and I also trust are well known in your consciences."

3. In this test, the Lord Himself will describe the kind of "builder", or servant, we have been

Matthew 25:21

"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.'"

Matthew 25:26

"But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed.'"

4. The longer we live, the more “storms” we are likely to face; but it is important that we understand that this final “storm” is one which no one can escape!

a. Hence it is important that we see the importance of building our lives on a foundation that will enable us to withstand this storm as well as all the storms we face along the way!

III. OBEYING JESUS IS THE KEY TO WITHSTANDING THE STORMS

A. BEING A “HEARER” ONLY IS NOT SUFFICIENT

Matthew 7:26-27

“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: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

1. James wrote that being a hearer only is deceiving oneself

James 1:22-24

“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 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; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.”

2. If we build like the unscrupulous contractor and only hear the real quality standards, the storms we face in this life will reveal the true quality of the character we are using as a foundation for our lives!

Numbers 32:23

“But if you do not do so, then take note, you have sinned against the LORD; and be sure your sin will find you out.”

B. THEREFORE, WE MUST “DO” ALL THAT JESUS SAYS

1. Only those who “build” on all that Jesus said will be those who withstand the storms

Matthew 7:24-25

“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: 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.”

2. Notice, the wise build their lives (houses) upon the “rock” (a solid foundation)

3. As James went on to write, it is the doer who is blessed in what he does

James 1:25

“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.”

C. HOW DO THESE SAYINGS OF JESUS HELP US WITHSTAND THE STORMS

1. His saying teach us where the “wise” lay up treasure

Matthew 6:19-21

“Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

a. Notice the protection treasures in heaven are afforded, unlike those on earth which can be stolen or lost, current conditions are a clear realization of this problem!

2. He therefore gives us the wisdom to know what we need to be seeking

Matthew 6:33

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.”

a. Jesus, in His teaching is calling upon all of us to seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness

b. It is also important to remember that by heeding His words, we do not need to have anxiety over the future

3. Indeed, His sayings provide the basis for a solid foundation on which to build a lives.

4. Seeking and obeying the words of Jesus will also enable us to avoid being misled by false prophets

Matthew 7:15-20

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Therefore by their fruits you will know them.”

5. Seeking and obeying the words of Jesus will also help us to stay on the straight and narrow way which leads to Heaven (spiritual life)

Matthew 7:13-14

“Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”

6. I find it very interesting that the advice now being given, which is nothing less than common sense, should have been being followed all along!

a. OUR APPROACH TO THE CARE OF OTHERS!

Matthew 7:12

“Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

b. PRAYER

Matthew 7:7-11

“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. Or what man is there among you who, if his son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!”

c. THE USE OF AN INCONSISTENT STANDARD IN THE JUDGEMENT OF OTHERS

Matthew 7:1-6

"Judge not, that you be not judged. For with what judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, 'Let me remove the speck from your eye'; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. Do not give what is holy to the dogs; nor cast your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you in pieces."

d. TO UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE WHERE THE NECESSITIES OF LIFE TRULY COME FROM

Matthew 6:30-34

"Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

e. TO UNDERSTAND WHAT IS TRULY IMPORTANT

Matthew 6:19-21

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

CONCLUSION

1. Yes, we can have a life that can truly withstand the storms this world will bring on us!
 - a. But only if we build on the right Foundation!
2. What kind of foundation are you building your house (life) upon?
 - a. Heed what Jesus is saying, and your life will be solid
 - b. Be listeners only, and your life will be as shaky as sand!
3. Just as Jesus is the Rock-solid foundation of the church
 - a. So let Him be the Rock-solid foundation of your life!