

A study of Jesus' Parables

“AND THE RESULTS ARE...”

Last Week, we discussed the interpretation of the parable of the soils. Basically, God's truth revealed through His Word will impact people differently based on the condition of their heart. This Week, our parable takes a similar idea a step further. Instead of four different kinds of soils, we'll be looking at two builders and the value of their construction methods.

There are two important keys to understanding today's parable. First, today's parable doesn't focus as much on the construction of the foundation or any other building materials. Instead, the focus of the parable is on the setting of the foundation itself—rock or sand.

Second, a sand foundation wasn't a beach-front property. It refers to a flat sand-bed. There were several advantages to building on sand. It was cheaper and easier. Building on a rock foundation took more effort, time, money, and basically increased the hassle. Despite these advantages, the setting for the foundation is weak. More importantly, the fool has built his house in a terrible location, as we will see.

Ultimately, the foundation for someone's life determines their ability to withstand the storms that we all face. Will their investment last into eternity or will it be destroyed? Like cultivating the soil of your heart, a structure's foundation dramatically impacts the results.

MARK 7:24–29

²⁴ “Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them is like a wise man who built his house on rock.

²⁵ The rain fell, the flood came, and the winds beat against that house, but it did not collapse because it had been founded on rock. ²⁶ Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain fell, the flood came, and the winds beat against that house, and it collapsed; it was utterly destroyed!”

²⁸ When Jesus finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed by his teaching, ²⁹ because he taught them like one who had authority, not like their experts in the law.

SCOUTING REPORT

SETTING Sermon on the Mount with a large crowd

NEED Explain two ways to prepare for eternal judgment

STORY 2 builders, 2 difference foundations, 1 storm, 2 consequences

TRUTH Our life's foundation determines our eternal destiny

DISCUSSION

Share about the craziest storm you've ever personally seen.

1. What does Jesus say makes a person "like a wise man...?" (24)

2. What three specific tests did the two houses have to withstand? (25, 27)

3. What were the results of the test for each house? (25, 27)

4. What central truth do you think Jesus wanted to illustrate using this parable?

5. Based on what you know of God's teaching in the Bible, in what ways have you built your house on the rock?

6. Is there any area where you have acted like the foolish builder? Why or why not?

Jesus' authority demands a response. If we fail to listen and obey, we can expect hurt and heartache. If God's Word has challenged you to do something, talk with your coach today!

ICEBREAKER

OBSERVATION

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

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STUDY NOTES

\$60 MILLION SANDBOX

When Allen, Texas opened their state-of-the-art football stadium for their championship team back in 2012, it was the biggest high school stadium Texas had ever seen for a single school. It stood as a monument, built through the voluntary support of the tax-payers. Fans were excited until cracks became visible in the concourse and it had to be shut down for safety.

Many months and over \$10 million in repairs later, Allen stadium reopened. Here's the kicker: had the needed repairs been done during construction it would have cost less than \$1 million. However, because so much had to be demolished and redone properly, the fix was over 10 times more expensive than if it had been done the right way the first time.

Eagles stadium in Allen points to a simple truth—cutting corners rarely works out. Work must be done right the first time, starting with a solid foundation.

A BUILDER ILLUSTRATES LIFE'S FOUNDATION

Today's parable compares two builders—one wise and the other foolish. What makes the wise man so wise? Simple. He **built his house on rock**, while the **foolish man built his house on sand**.

When I was a child, I misunderstood this story. There wasn't sand where I grew up. Sand was at the beach. So, I pictured this story at the beach. Not so. As previously mentioned, the sandy parts of the region where Jesus taught were flat sand-beds. These sand-beds were low lying areas that remained bone-dry most of the year. So, building on a sand foundation, although easy, cheap, and fast, was a short-term investment with long-term negative consequences.

Building on the rock, refers to the bedrock under the soil. This is the same bedrock that is strong enough to hold the highest skyscrapers—it's tough. Although it is more difficult and time consuming, it is the obvious better choice if you don't want your home destroyed. It's an investment that will reap long-range results.

When Jesus says "**the rain fell**" it's not a drizzle, but a downpour. Soon after the rain, **the flood came**. Later, you can type "flash flood" into YouTube and get an idea of what's happening with modern examples. Water starting in the mountains can flow down into bone-dry creek beds building up so fast that it's an instant raging river. These rivers destroy anything in their path. It's not uncommon to see fully grown trees, cars, roofs from houses carried by the current. Anything that gets in the way is **utterly destroyed**.

LIFE'S FOUNDATION MUST BE IN GOD'S TRUTH

As Jesus told this parable, he was standing among a crowd that he had been teaching. He was concluding a lesson that we call the "Sermon on the Mount." His audience would have clearly understood the folly of building a house on sand. Likewise, they would have known the value of building a house on rock. But, in this parable, what does it mean to build on the rock?

Jesus says, "**Everyone who hears these words of mine and does them,**" is a wise builder. In the context of the Sermon on the Mount, this parable essentially said, "It's not enough to *hear* what I've said, you must *act* on it." The Gospel writer, Matthew, records three chapters of Jesus preaching on what it means to live in light of the Kingdom of God. This parable teaches that Jesus measures our wisdom by our heart-level obedience to God's truth.

Why did Jesus tell a parable instead of saying, "Now go and do what I say!"? If you see a flash flood, you understand at a gut-level the devastation it brings. The Sermon on the Mount isn't advice like how to change a car battery. What he has been saying matters on an eternal scale. If I hear Jesus' words and don't act on it, I'm placing the investment of my entire life, and my life itself, in the path of annihilation.

Our previous parable of the soils, reminded us that we have a spiritual enemy, Satan, and that there are worries of this world that can distract us from truth. These things **beat against** our **house**. This may come in the form of tragedy and loss. It seems like every few months we hear about another mass-shooting or other devastating event that can shake our faith in people and God.

Flood and winds come in various forms. Some people have their world crumble because of things that others might see as insignificant. Not making varsity, not getting a certain grade, breaking up with a boyfriend or girlfriend are sometimes a huge deal to us, but relatively insignificant when considering the suffering of others around the world. The magnitude of the storm does not matter if you have a weak foundation.

So, again I ask, "What does it mean to build *your* house on the rock?" Life's foundation must be in God's truth, and that starts with understanding and trusting in the Gospel. The Gospel is the "Good News" that Jesus, God in the flesh, lived a perfect life and died as a sacrifice for your sin and mine. Our sin separated us from God dooming us to an eternity apart from him. However, when we believe and receive the Gospel, we can begin to build on a foundation of a relationship with the Creator of the Universe.