

"The Purpose of the Sermon on the Mount"

Part 13

Matthew 7:13-29

Introduction: Last week in our study of the Sermon on the Mount we started to look at the closing verses.

Notice Matthew 7:24-27

There are within these verses 3 contrasts:

1. Two builders; the wise and the foolish.
2. Two foundations; the rock and the sand.
3. Two end results; stability and collapse.

Last week in our study we looked at the "wise builder" who built his house upon a rock. We must keep in mind the theme of these verses is the very theme which is found in Matthew 7:21-23 and that theme is "obedience". Jesus is speaking the Words which we find here for the purpose of causing people to look very closely at their own hearts to be sure of their salvation. In Matthew 7:21-23 our Lord made it very clear that "obedience" is proof of salvation.

Then He uses the word "therefore" in verse 24 to carry the very same thought of "obedience" right into verses 24-27. The "obedience" in verses 24-27 are pictured as a foundation which provides stability in the midst of the storms of life for the one who is truly saved thus giving the believer assurance of his or her salvation. We all know that we are not saved by works but when a person is truly saved they will be obedient and that obedience is evidence of salvation.

Last week we looked at how we are strengthened in our Christian character as we walk in obedience to the Word of God. Here is just one of the verses we look at last week.

Acts 20:33

³² *And now, brethren, I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among all them which are sanctified.*

The more we walk in obedience the stronger we become in our Christian character and our obedience enables us to stand in the midst of the storms.

Notice the words of F. W. Grant:

"He who puts His [Jesus'] sayings livingly into practice shall build a house that will endure the storm. None else and nothing else will."

Now I know that some people will disagree and say when Jesus speaks of the house upon the rock here in Matthew 7 He is speaking of Himself as the Rock. I agree that the "house" which endures the storm in this section is a "house" which is built upon "The Rock" who is Jesus but in this context Jesus is speaking of "proof" of salvation and that proof is "obedience" and it is a life of obedience that strengthens and equips us for the storms of life. There are people who are saved and only walk in obedience when it is convenient for them. These are believers who struggle in the midst of the storms of life.

Let me show you some verses that will support the Truth obedience gives to us the stability we need for the storms of life.

James 1:5-8

⁵ If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

⁶ But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

⁷ For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

⁸ A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

There are many "double minded" believers who are very unstable in all their ways. These are believers who are not fully surrendered and so they are like waves driven by the wind.

2 Peter 1:5-10

⁵ And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

⁶ And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

⁷ And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

⁸ For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

⁹ But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

¹⁰ Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

Peter is writing to believers who were under the persecution of Nero. He therefore encouraged them to live in obedience so they would be strengthened and therefore they would not fall. They would be assured of their salvation and therefore would be willing to stand in the face of the fiery trials which came their way.

Tonight I want to look at the storm which came upon the wise man's house and then we will look at the results. But before we get to this I need to share with you some back ground which I found on the living conditions of Jesus' day.

Notice the words of J. Brown:

"In Judea, as in other oriental countries, the rains are periodical. When they descend, they often descend in torrents, and continue to do so, with unabated violence, for a number of days. In consequence of this, the most trifling mountain brook becomes a mighty river—a deluge rushing down with dreadful impetus from the high grounds to the plains, converting them into one wide waste of waters. The huts of the inhabitants, generally formed of clay hardened in the sun, are exposed to great danger. They are often literally melted down by the heavy rains or overturned the furious gusts of winds; and when not founded on the solid rock, undermined and swept away by the resistless torrent. In such a country, it is part of a wise man to take good care that the foundation on which he builds his habitation be solid. He who attends to this precaution is likely to find the advantage of doing so, and he who neglects this precaution is likely to pay dearly for his folly."

I. The Storm

Matthew 7:25a

²⁵ *And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house;*

I want to consider the 3 parts of the storm which are mentioned and here and see what each ones means to you and me in our Christian lives.

1. **The rain.**

The rain here in this verse can be seen as the tests of our faith which come down from heaven. God allows many things into our lives in order to try of faith so as to prove our faith and to refine our faith.

Genesis 22:1-2

And it came to pass after these things, that God did tempt Abraham, and said unto him, Abraham: and he said, Behold, here I am.

² *And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.*

Deuteronomy 8:2

² *And thou shalt remember all the way which the LORD thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep his commandments, or no.*

Deuteronomy 13:1-3

If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,

² And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;

³ Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

John 6:5-6

⁵ When Jesus then lifted up his eyes, and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat?

⁶ And this he said to prove him: for he himself knew what he would do.

Over and over again in the Bible we are told that God tests the faith of His children. Notice the words of Spurgeon on this very thought.

"These rains typify affliction from heaven. God will send you adversities like showers, tribulations as many as the drops of the dew. Between now and heaven, oh, professor, you will feel the pelting storm. Like other men, your body will be sick; or if not, you shall have trial in your house: children and friends will die, or riches will take to themselves wings and fly like an eagle. You must have trials from God's hand, and if you are not relying on Christ, you will not be able to bear them. If you are not by real faith one with Christ, even God's rains will be too much for you."

There will be times when God tests and tries our faith.

2. The floods.

The floods here can be seen as opposition from the world. The picture within this thought is one which we need to pay very close attention to. When rivers and streams rise to flood stage the currents are very strong. It takes something like a deep rooted tree to be able to withstand the powerful raging currents.

The same is true in our world today. The world's current is very powerful and if we are not rooted deep within the Word and walking in obedience to God's Word we will be swept along by the strong flow of worldly views and practices.

Psalm 1:1-3

Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

² But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

³ And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

3. The winds.

The "winds" in this passage picture the attacks from Satan for he is the "prince of the power of the air". The Apostle Paul helps us to understand the attacks of Satan a little better.

Ephesians 6:16

¹⁶ Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Satan uses fiery darts against you and me. There are several darts which he uses:

1. Darts of doubt.

These darts are shot at us all the time. Satan will attempt to get us to doubt God's love, His forgiveness, His promises, His provisions, His power His presence and the list goes on and on.

2. Darts of discouragement.

These darts are shot at us when we are on the front lines of the battle. The enemy will do all he can to discourage us from serving because he knows God will work through us. Satan will use the comments of others to attempt to discourage you. He will bring critics who will pick apart your service for God. They will tell you that you are wasting your time. They may criticize your teaching. They may get others to join their side so as to attempt to stop you.

Let me just say that when these darts are shot at you and me we must shake them off as quickly as possible. Some of them have barbs and they will stick for a while but we must stand firm.

3. Darts of fear.

These darts are often shot when you prepare to enter the heat of the battle. There is often the fear that you are not equipped for service. There is often the fear of failure. There is the fear of other people. These are all ways the enemy attempts to get us to do nothing.

Let's get back to the point. Now we can better understand the spiritual meaning of the storm which Jesus spoke of here in Matthew 7. Let me give you one very important lesson from the storm. As believers we can

expect there will be storms. God will test our faith and He will permit our faith to be tested by Satan through various attacks. When the attacks come there are 3 verses which we must keep in mind.

1 Peter 4:12-14

¹² Beloved, **think it not strange** concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

¹³ But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

¹⁴ If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

Conclusion:

In the conclusion let me give to you some encouragement which is seen in the results of walking in obedience when the storms come upon us.

Matthew 7:25b

²⁵ And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; **and it fell not**: for it was founded upon a rock.

Living in obedience can be very difficult in our day. There is with the obedience a sacrifice which must be made. We looked at that last week and how we must "dig deep" to get the solid foundation according to Luke. There is always the temptation to just go with the flow of society. But a closer look at Matthew 7:25 tells us there is a great reward for those who walk up stream against the flow of the world. So consider these thoughts:

Instead of being occupied with the narrowness of the path let us focus upon the heavenly goal. Instead of being distracted with the pain of dying to our own dreams and desires let us remember what it is that God has saved us from and that is the fires of hell. Instead of complaining about how difficult it is to walk in obedience let us rejoice in the rewards of remaining steadfast and that is we will have stability and peace in the midst of the storms.

Psalm 119:165

¹⁶⁵ Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.