

SERMON ON THE MOUNT-WISDOM  
Matthew 7.24-29

*“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who builds his house on the rock.*

*The rains came down, the streams rose,  
and the winds blew and beat against the house;  
Yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.*

*But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who build his house on the sand.*

*The rain came down, the streams rose,  
and the winds blew and beat against that house,  
and it fell with a great crash.*

*When Jesus finished saying these things the crowd was amazed at his teachings, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.”*

Let’s start with a little camp song today.

The wise man built his house upon the rock, his house upon the rock.  
The wise man built his house upon the rock, and the rains came pouring down.  
The rains came down, and the floods came up, the rains came down and the flood came up,  
The rains came down and the floods came up, and the house on the rock stood firm.

The foolish man built his house upon the sand, the foolish man built his house upon the sand.  
The foolish man built his house upon the sand and the rains came pouring down.  
The rains came down, and the floods came up, the rains came down and the flood came up,  
The rains came down and the house on the sand went SPLAT!!!

So build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ, build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ,  
So build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ, and blessings will come tumbling down.  
The blessings come down and the prayers go up, the blessing come down and the prayers go up.  
The blessings come down and the prayers go up, and the life on Christ stands FIRM!!!

A couple of weeks ago our mailbox got wiped out by the snowplow.  
Well the neighbor suggested I go buy a Gibraltar post and mailbox and put it up.  
He said it would be **easy for me** to put up the Gibraltar post and mail box.  
Ya right.

I did go buy one and I did get the box open.  
I know that surprises you but hey, I took a little paring knife,  
and Schwwwittt...cut right through the tape on the box.  
It actually went very well.  
I was very proud of myself. I got the box opened.

Then I started to put together what I could of the Gibraltar post and mail box.  
Actually, I did very well...I’ll spare you the details...I bet that surprises you too.

Everything went very well until after I'd driven the post into the ground.  
 It was when I put the casing, the cute white plastic cover over the metal post,  
 stood back to admire my great work and ahhh,  
 the post was leaning forward and to the side.

What had happened?

The metal post, the base, the foundation post put in right.

I felt terrible until I remembered reading about Bonano Pisano.  
 He was the Italian architect who in 1174 began work  
 on a stand-alone bell tower.

What most of us have come to know as the Tower of Pisa.

The Tower of Pisa was to be only 8 stories and 185 feet tall,

The builders quickly discovered two problems.  
 Pisa means "marshy land and it was much too soft to build in."  
 And the other problem, the foundation itself was only ten feet deep.  
 That was far too shallow to support the structure.

And sure enough it began to tilt and has continued to tilt.  
 To compensate for the tilt they tried to shore up the foundation.  
 Another solution was to build the towers at different angles  
 in hopes of making the top look straight.

Neither one have been successful.

The tower continues to tilt, 1/20<sup>th</sup> of an inch each year

It was predicted it would fall in 2007.

It hasn't happened yet, but it keeps tipping, and it's gonna fall.

Why? It was built on a marsh, it isn't built on a solid foundation.

Jesus ends the Sermon on the Mount teaching about building a life on a solid foundation.  
 He says that if you build on a solid foundation you are wise.  
 If you build without the good solid foundation, you're foolish.

To be wise you need wisdom.

Now wisdom is not necessarily any mysterious thing,  
 although it often seems to elude us.

I like to think wisdom is basically the instruction, insight, and inspiration we get from God.

Jesus might define it this way, "***whoever hears my words and puts them into practice...***"  
 Wisdom is both hearing what we are suppose to do and then doing it.

James said it this way, ***“Be doers of the Word, not hearers only.”***

And remember Jesus also tells his disciple, “Listen if you have ears.”  
He really told them not to let it go in one ear and out the other, meaning do what I say.

The Book of Proverbs tells us we should listen.

***“Let the wise listen and add to their learning.”*** Proverbs 1.5 (NIV)

And a few verses later in verse seven, we’re told where wisdom starts, Proverbs 1.7 (NIV)

***“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and discipline.”***

Have you ever wondered what the phrase “fear of the Lord” means?

It can be translated awesome, terrified, feared reverence, or if you ask Laurie Suko, “Whoa!”

Here is a great story that describes “Whoa!” (more frightened) or “Whoa! (more surprised)

The Higgs were on vacation.

They had promised their children they’d see huge mountains, giant mountains.

But when they were driving in the mountains,

they barely saw the road let alone any mountains because of the fog.

They finally found the cabin, had something to eat,

and since there was nothing to see, went to bed.

The next morning, they got up, opened the curtains, and “Whoa!”

I mean “Whoa!” It was awesome! It was incredible.

There was this giant mountain.

“Whoa! It was terrifying, it looked like the mountain was going to fall on them.

That is feared reverence and that drives people to God.

Now in Matthew the basic question is always who is the rightful King of your life?

Whose side are you on, Herod’s or Jesus?

Do we live and love only for the things of this world, that Herod’s way?

Or do we live and love for Jesus?

I’m sure most of us would say we choose God’s way

but I’m not so sure our conduct is consistent with our choices.

Are we selfish or are we servants?

Are we greedy or are we generous.

Do we rant and rave about others or do we seek reconciliation with others?

Again we have a choice Herod’s way or God’s way?

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Solomon asked for and was given wisdom.

He showed great wisdom when he ordered the baby to be divided equally between the “two mothers.”  
He demonstrated a great lack of wisdom when he had 700 wives and 300 concubines.

Psalm 1 begins the Book of Psalms teaching about the importance of having wisdom.

The psalm cautions the reader about the consequence of their conduct.

It is wise not to mess with sin.

It is wise see no evil, hear no evil, nor speak no evil.

Verse 1 starts, ***“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, or stand in the way of the sinners, or sit in the seat of mockers.”***

The Message translates the first verse this way,

***“How well God must like you,  
You don’t slink along Dead-End Road,  
you don’t hang out at Sin Saloon,  
and you don’t go to smart mouth college.”***

***“Doesn’t walk in the counsel of the wicked...”*** (SEE NO EVIL)

Picture a person walking down the road and they see a few people up to some mischief.

Well, there is more than mischief going on...it’s wrong or it’s evil.

A person may or may not be curious about what is going on but doesn’t choose to stop.

They keep walking. (Unless there is some injustice they can help change or a crime to report.)

To move on then means to “see no evil.”

***“Or stand in the way of sinners...”*** (HEAR NO EVIL)

This is more like stand with and listen to those doing wrong.

One that “Hears No Evil,” refuses stand around and even just listen to those plotting evil.

***“Or sit in the seat of mockers...”*** (SPEAK NO EVIL)

Notice the regression from simply seeing...to hearing...to now speaking..

The wicked, the sinner, the mocker has slid down the slippery slope of sin

and become part of the greater sin, willfully joining in and participating in the conspiracy.

To avoid that, to choose not to become apart of that is to “speak no evil.”

Who has seen the movie “Sea Biscuit?”

I’m told it’s a great family movie except for one steamy scene and a few choice words that were put in the movie to get the PG rating and a few more moviegoers.

Anyway, a youngster named Matt was in the theater with his family.

When it came time for the steamy scene his mom took a peek at Matt.

Matt didn’t even take a peek at the scen.

In fact he sat with his head down with his hands on his forehead covering his eyes.

Matt could have been the perfect picture, the poster child of one seeing no evil,

hearing no evil, and speaking no evil.

Could you and I be the poster child of seeing and hearing no evil  
as we see and hear stuff on TV or in movies which challenge our morality.

Could you and I be the perfect picture of speaking no evil  
when we're angry or tempted to talk unfavorably about others?

Let's read on and find out in verse two **where** the "blessed one" gets his wisdom  
**"But his delight is in the law of the Lord"**

His delight can be translated his thrill, his passion, what makes him tick.

***And on his law he meditates day and night.*** (He chews on scripture)

Think of a person slowly chewing, savoring every bite of a juicy steak or delicious desert.

Or better yet, maybe not as appetizing but very applicable,  
a cow that is enjoying chewing its cud.

The cow patiently chews on it's cud, then swallows,  
and then brings it back up to chew on it some more.

It takes time for the cow to chew and digest the cud,  
it takes time for us to ponder and digest the scripture, for it to become part of us.  
Gaining wisdom takes time and patience.

In verse 3 we find out **what** the blessed one gets **for** his wisdom.

***"He is like a tree planted by streams of water,  
which yield its fruit in season.***

***And whose leaf does not wither.***

***Whatever he does he prospers."***

Prosper means to be freed, released, raised up and out of...

Now, how about the one who builds on sand?

***Verse 4, "Not so the wicked!***

***They are like chaff that the wind blows away."***

Remember the three little pigs.

The big bad wolf, huffed and he puffed and he blew their houses down.

Two of those houses weren't strong enough and fell.

they had no real substance, no real foundation, and nothing to ground them.

Are you and I grounded enough in Christ to withstand the storms of life,  
when rains, the floods, and the winds of life's struggles and sorrows blow?

We'll come back to this insightful Psalm some other week.

I want to say something about the wisdom of our culture today  
vs. what we understand of the Christian faith.

First let me ask you, “Is Jesus your Savior and Lord?”

Now I ask that because there is a prevalent perspective, there always has been a probably will continue to be, that Jesus was a very, very, very nice guy, a great man, a great prophet, but not necessarily the Savior.

That is pretty predictable, I Peter 2.7, ***“Now to you who believe the stone is precious. But to you who do not believe, the stone the builders rejected, has become a cornerstone, A stone that causes men to stumble, and a rock that makes them fall.”***

Jesus is the rock we want to build on.  
And running on a parallel track to that is the thought that there is no need for a Savior, because there is really no sin.

There are poor choices, but really no sin.  
How absurd is that?  
We look at our world and think it’s got to be more than poor choices.

Is it just poor choices that are responsible  
for so much hate and hostility people,  
for so much rebellion and rage in our lives  
for so much injustice and unfairness, greed and selfishness in our world?

And we can’t call it sin.  
Thinking no sin and no Savior...  
that sure would be building a house on the shifting sand.  
that would be building a life like a house of cards.

There was this camper who so patiently and painstakingly  
put together a three or four story house of cards.

I came a long, and carefully, patiently (I know that is hard to believe),  
patiently and painstakingly sat down.  
But guess what? Yep, I bumped the table.  
Just a little...hardly...a slight bump...a little bump and...  
SPLAT!!!

It wasn’t hard to know how he felt. SPLAT!!!  
All his time and effort. SPLAT!!!  
All his patience and persistence!!! SPLAT

So what would our lives of sin be without the cross? SPLAT!!!  
All the ungodly things we’ve said or done in our lives without the cross? SPLAT!!!  
Where will we find forgiveness without the cross? SPLAT!!!

Hebrews 9.22 says, ***“In fact the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”***

We need to know why we believe in Jesus, in his life, death, burial, and resurrection. Paul tells us in I Corinthians 15.3-4, that the most important thing he’s learned and the most important thing he will teach is that Christ died, was buried, and was raised according to the scripture.

Jesus tells us in Matthew 16.24 that building on this good foundation will cost us something, ***“If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me.”***

Or in the Message, ***“Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You are not in the drivers seat; I am. Don’t run from suffering, embrace it. Follow me and I’ll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self.”***

I’ll bet your wondering about my mailbox.  
Did I ever get it right?  
I did, indeed. I did indeed.

I called for help and a friend came to help me.  
He had the knowledge, the wisdom, the skill,  
and the tools to help me get the foundational post right.

Is there anyone here today that needs the right foundation to build on?  
The rains, floods, and winds of life are overwhelming you?  
You need help keeping your balance?

You’re afraid for some reason or for any other reason  
to just start building your life on Christ.

If you do I know a friend who can help, who wants to help.  
Jesus is that friend.

He is our rock, our shield, our fortress, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.  
He the alpha and omega, the way, the truth, and the life, he will be your all and all.  
He is the bread of life, the light of the world, the gate, the good shepherd,  
the resurrection and the life, the way, the truth, and the life.

If you want to build your life upon that rock, pray with me now.