

Two Houses, One Foundation

Matthew 7:24-29

Introduction – You have heard a series on the Sermon on the Mount, and like those who first heard the sermon, you must answer a question. What are you going to do about this sermon? Without a proper understanding of application, all that has been said is useless. In fact, it is worse than useless, “...for everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be required; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.”

A Series of Comparisons and Contrasts – The distinction is not between houses. Outwardly, these homes appear to be the same. The desires of each man on one level appear to be the same. But there are distinctions.

Hearing and Doing – The distinction does not have to do with hearing the Word. Neither does it have to do with a lack of activity. Both men hear, and both men build houses. But one did not listen. James 1:22 – “*But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*”

Wisdom and Foolishness – A fool is not a man who is ignorant of the truth. A fool is a man who ignores the truth. The wise man listens, and then does *what* Christ said to do, the *way* He said to do it. The fool may look wise to many for a time – but “your sin will find you out” (Num 32:20-23).

Rock and Sand – Luke 6:46-49 is the parallel passage and emphasizes that the first man “*dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock*”. This man put the information into practice and did the hard work necessary. He counted the cost (Luke 14:28). He ‘digs deep’ who empties himself of self-righteousness, self-esteem, and self-sufficiency and strives for an inward, experimental knowledge of the Truth, not simply a ‘head-nod’ assent. He ‘digs deep’ who seeks to hide God’s Word in his heart, mortifies His flesh, and strives for holiness that accompanies salvation (2 Pet 1:10-11).

Life and Death – The wisdom of the wise is only revealed at the time of trial. In fact, he might look foolish to some, working so hard at a foundation no one will see. But Christ is speaking hard words of discipleship. Do you love the Lord? Love is expressed by obedience and not by sentimentalism (John 14:15-24, 1 John 5:2-3). If you trust Him, you will stand in obedience and you have nothing to fear, for eternity, heaven, the kingdom, all the earth – it is all yours in Christ. If you do not trust Him, love Him, know Him, the way Christ commands – you are guaranteed a great fall. When the investment is a poor one, the fool is not rewarded for his great effort. His house can be as big as the Kingdom...

Astonished at the Message – The greek word translated here ‘astonished’ means to be dumbstruck, or beside oneself.

Scribes – The office of scribe dates back at least to some time before Ezra, who was a scribe (Neh 8:1-4). The job of a scribe then was to keep, teaching, and commenting on the Word of God. But by Jesus’ day, scribes spent most of their time commenting on what other rabbis taught. The traditions of men had taken over the commands of God (Matt 15:9). And so it is today. In the church, pop-psychology and therapeutic treatment vastly overshadow the call for repentance, confession of sin, and the commandments of God.

Jesus – But they had not come to hear just another scribe or just another teacher (Heb 2:1-4, 12:25-29). Jesus left no room to be considered just ‘a good example’, or ‘a good teacher’. He spoke with great authority – “but I say to you”, “I came to fulfill the law and the Prophets”, “I will declare to them...”

Authority in the Messenger – Jesus had authority, speaking as the very Son of God. Authority is vested in preachers when they are commissioned by Christ’s church. This is why the requirements for elder emphasize character and not professionalism. We are ‘lesser teachers’ who, as John Bunyan said, “*preach liberty to others, while always hearing the rattle of my own chains*”. We must plead to God for a reformation of preaching throughout the church. We must plead for God to raise up men who will reflect that same authority of their Lord. In times past, this has brought a powerful influence upon the saints of God first, and then upon the world at large as well.

Conclusion – “*The man who never knows what it is to have certain fears about himself, fears which drive him to Christ, is in a highly dangerous condition*” Lloyd-Jones. “*Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: “The Lord knows those who are His,” and, “Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity”*” – 2 Tim 2:19.

How is it with your soul? – Is your destiny resting upon the rock-solid foundation of Jesus Christ, or are you only dressed in religious camouflage?