

Matthew 7 : 21 - 29 - 2 Builders - Christ our rock

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. [22] Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' [23] Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"

[24] "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. [25] The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. [26] But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. [27] The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

[28] When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, [29] because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

Our passage today, is the conclusion of what, is considered the most memorable of all Jesus' teaching, the Sermon on the Mount. It starts in Chapter 5 with the words of the bee-attitudes, and concludes with the words we have just heard.

My friends, I believe, it is significant, that Jesus, ended the Sermon on the Mount, with the parable of the Wise, and Foolish Builders.

Now, throughout the long day, Jesus had been preaching, to a great many people. They listened to him, with amazement, awe and wonder. But Jesus, warned them, that, THAT was not enough. It is never enough, simply to listen, to the words of Jesus, even though; we may listen, with reverent, approval. You see, if His words, are to have, any genuine effect, in our lives, we must not only, hear them, but also, ACT upon them. We must incorporate them, in the events, of our, day-to-day, living.

And so, to drive the point home, Jesus told, the compelling story, of two builders, who each, built a home. Now, standing inside, these homes, going, from room to room, there was little, or no, discernible difference, between them. Even, from the outside, one might say, they were virtually, indistinguishable, from one another.

But, BUT, said Jesus; the foundations, were the significant, if **not vital** difference. For one, was built, upon the rock, and the other, upon sand. Now, when Jesus spoke, about houses, and foundations, many believe, he knew, what he was talking about. As a carpenter, by trade, he and his family, may well, of been involved, in the, construction industry. (I wonder if Jesus, drank Tea ??)

Now, the people there, listening to Jesus' teaching, understood well, the significance, of building, upon rock, verses sand. But very few people, in ancient Palestine, wanted to live, in the rocks. It meant building, on the side, of a slope, difficult to do in, so many ways, making it level, for a start and not least, the sheer effort, of hauling up, materials, to build with. Also, living in the hills, made for more, difficult travel. Water, had to be carried, and the winter winds, were colder.

And so, most people, followed the path, of least resistance, and built, in the valleys, along, the riverbeds; for the scenery, was far more pleasant, the water, more conveniently located, and the house, was sheltered, from the cold winds, of winter. And although flooding, was a danger, well, for most of the year, the streams, trickled, pleasantly down, the hillsides, into the river, nearby.

But, BUT, on rare occasions, perhaps only, once a generation, the 100-year flood, would come. There would be, a combination, of an unusually, heavy snow, a quick spring thaw, and a torrential, downpour. The result was, a vicious flash flood, which swept away, everything, in its path. Entire villages, could be washed away. House, after house, gone and great, would be, the fall.

To conclude: In 1992, Hurricane Andrew, destroyed thousands, of homes, in South Florida. Yet in an area, where the wreckage, looked like, a war zone, one house, remained standing, still, firmly anchored, to its foundation.

When a reporter, asked the homeowner, why, his house, had not been, blown away, he replied, "I built this house, myself. I also built it, according, to the Florida State, building code. When the code, called for, 2" x 6" roof trusses, I used, 2" x 6" roof trusses. For I was told, that a house, built according, to code, could withstand, a hurricane, -- and, it did. IT DID"

My Friends, Jesus talked about, the importance, of building our lives, on a solid, foundation. He said, that the person, who obeys, His Word, is like "a wise man, who built his house, on the rock" (Matt. 7:24).

Now I believe, that if we, build according, to His code, His Word, we will not, be swept away, when crises hit, with hurricane, like force. For even, the tempests, of temptation, and the storms, of suffering, will not, WILL NOT, be able, to sweep us, off a solid foundation, of faith and obedience, to His Word, His Love.

My friends : We know, that life, at times, goes through tempests and storms, and adversity, may come, in to our lives; But, BUT, because, we have built, according to the code, of the unshakeable Rock, Jesus Christ, we can emerge, with our faith honed, our character strengthened, as we live, our lives, in the fullness, of our God, and His love, for you and me.

So Finally Have we taken the easy path ?
Are we building our lives according to Jesus' code?
Are we building our lives on the Rock that is Christ Jesus ?

Heavenly Father,
Thank you, for being my rock.
Thank you, for giving my feet, a solid ground, to stand on.
Thank you Father, that even in, the storms of life, you are my solid foundation.
Thank you that you never give up on us.

Father God, I know in my heart of hearts, that you, have everything, under control, but when I face, the storms of life, I know at times, that I look, at everything else, but you, and so I ask you to forgive me, that I, may seek you, your word, and your love for me.

And so Lord, I thank you, that you can calm, my fears, our fears, and that even in the midst, of the storm, you hold us, and that you love us.

And so, I ask Lord, that you would take away all fear, all anxiety, and give us the boldness to serve you, each and every day, as we continue in this journey of life and faith.
For this we ask in Jesus Name – AMEN

Well, Thank You for listening. Hope to see again, on Thursday,
But for now, may the blessing and peace of God,
Father, Son and Holy Spirit, be with you, and those you love,
this day and always Amen.