

TUESDAY 24 May 2022 "Foundation Truth" (Matt. 7:24-27)

Hello my 'Walking with Jesus' friends all around the world,

I wonder what houses are like where you live in the world. Have you ever seen houses built on stilts or pillars because floods or high tides come there often? Or houses built up in trees, or houses made of mud, or I even know of a place where the house walls are made of cow dung with a little mud mixed in! Of all the various parts of a house, which part is most important? The roof, the walls, the floor, the foundation, the plumbing or electric, the doors or windows?

Today we finally come to the end of a long message Jesus once gave, and His disciple Matthew recorded for us in three chapters of his book, Matt. 5,6,7. Jesus said: **"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. 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. 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. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against the house, and it fell with a great crash."** (Matt. 7:24-27)

From the time we were little children we've been faced with this challenge: *What do we do with the wisdom we are offered by those who seem to have more wisdom than we have?* We all faced that question a thousand times when we were kids and our parents or teachers or coaches or other adults tried to help us learn some important life lessons, right? We especially faced this challenge when we were teenagers, didn't we? *But the sad truth is we LIVE this challenge, NOW, every day as adults, don't we?* Only now in addition to older adults we have social media deluging us with opinion, and non-stop cable TV spinning the information, and cell phones constantly notifying us of someone wanting to communicate with us!

As children we know we need help, lots of help in life. As teens we pretend that we don't, but of course we know we still have so much to learn, but we don't want to admit it, remember those days? But as adults... what's the problem with us? *Why do we resist help, especially when God offers us the wisdom both He and we know we need?*

In this long message Jesus had just finished giving some very powerful truth teaching on a wide range of real-life topics. Gathered on that hillside were people from every walk of life, both Jews and Gentiles, probably including some Roman soldiers keeping an eye on such a large crowd watching for any possible trouble. I'm sure there were some business leaders, educators, religious leaders, and political people, as well as hundreds of normal people.

Even though Jesus was just becoming known in the public arena, the combination of what He said and the miracles He performed was rapidly rising His popularity. *When Jesus spoke, people listened!* When word spread that Jesus had come to town, any town, a crowd gathered quickly.

But these words Matthew recorded for us call for a response, don't they? They could not be ignored, then or now. These words were either pridefully arrogant, or dangerously defiant or politically divisive, or religiously intolerant, or simply ludicrous... **or very wise!** Either this Jesus was someone who should be taken very seriously and every word He speaks evaluated carefully, OR he was a dangerous egomaniac who should be watched carefully by the soldiers for He might incite a riot, OR He was a lunatic, an idiot who should be taken away in chains and exiled someplace far away. *Yes, this man Jesus and His flamboyant message could not be ignored...then or now!!*

I notice this final salvo paragraph seems to be both an invitation and a challenge from Jesus to anyone who heard Him that day or anyone since who has read Matthew's record of what He said. *So, what exactly do you think Jesus meant* by His comparison of the people who heard and took seriously His words and then built their lives on His words like a man building a house on a rock foundation; as compared to the person who hears Jesus' words but does not integrate them into their life and continues building their life on what so many other people build their lives upon... *the drifting sands of popular opinion?* You see, my friends, Jesus' words called everyone then and every one of us who've read them, to ask one fundamental question: *what am I doing with Jesus' words? It's not a once in a lifetime question, it's an every day, every hour of everyday question!* Am I right?

It's not a hard question, is it my friends? *Some people simply ignore Jesus and His words.* To them, Jesus is not worth their time. They refuse to consider the question of His identity, or His life mission, or His accomplishments, or the significance of His Easter weekend. These people live their life with nothing at all connected to Jesus or anything about Jesus. And when the storms of life come, they look to their education or their accomplishments or their friends and family, or their social media, or their financial position or their favorite anesthesia, perhaps alcohol or drugs *to help them pretend there is no storm.*

But there are also many people who grant Jesus a small part of their lives. Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving, Mother's Day, Father's Day, weddings, and funerals are all significant events which they value and amazingly Jesus is often mentioned and sometimes even given some honor in these celebrations. It causes them to make a little room in their life for Jesus, even if only temporary and very limited in scope. Perhaps you know many people like this. *When the storms come some of these people cry out for God's help even though He seems a stranger to them.*

And then there are some folks who find value, maybe even significant value, in many things Jesus did or said, and depending on the situation in which they find themselves, they may turn to what they know of Jesus or His words to help them in the storms. *Jesus is a convenience, like so many of the APP's on their cell phones.*

And then, of course, there are a few of us who are like the wise man Jesus spoke of. We build our lives on Jesus and His words, and on all of God's Word and the work of God in our world since the beginning of time. *When storms come, we stand strong and firm, because Jesus stands with us, God's Word fills our hearts and our minds.*

I wonder if you find one of these descriptions coming close to how you view Jesus and His words? Oh, there are probably other groups of people, so go ahead, feel free to continue building the list of categories of people.

Do you see what Jesus was inviting and challenging His listeners then and now to do, my friends? *It's a double question... where does Jesus and His words fit in the normal course of your everyday life, AND where does Jesus and His words fit when the storms of life are crashing down all around you?* Have you learned there is only one person who can decide that for you? Not your parents or your spouse or your kids or your financial advisor. **Only you can decide where Jesus and HIS words of wisdom fit in your life!**

And have you learned this is an everyday decision? And have you noticed the people closest to you know very well what your decision is for they live in the shadow of that decision? Do you see why? *When life storms rage down on us, we all react, and that reaction shows everyone what our true relationship with Jesus is and also, what we really believe about Jesus' words.* You can't fake it; you can't pretend in the midst of a ferocious life storm. So... **what do the storms tell people about you, my friends?**

And I wonder... are you in a storm of life right now, or have you just come through a storm, or do you see the storm clouds gathering on your horizon? *What do these words in Matthew 7:24-27 tell us about the foundation of your life and how you are building the house of your life?* Listen... do you hear the winds of approaching storms howling? Are you ready?

In closing, perhaps you've heard of the Heidelberg Catechism written in 1563. The first of 52 questions and answers says this:

Question: What is your only comfort in life and in death?

Answer: That I am not my own, but belong—body and soul, in life and in death—to my faithful Savior, Jesus Christ.

Now that's a foundational statement worth building your life on, do you agree, and here's a great song recently written on these powerful truths of Jesus...

Today's Scripture is Matthew 7:24-27.