

Red Chairables

The Two Foundations

Part 6 – September 5, 2010

[VIDEO: FRIDAY CREEK]

Have you ever been caught in a storm, unprepared? No umbrella. No coat. How miserable! In the parable of The Two Foundations, Jesus tells about a man who built his house on the sand, and a man who built on the rock. And what we learn is that although the storms of life are inevitable, being prepared is a choice.

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 that house, and it fell with a great crash. - *Matthew 7:24-27 NIV*

This is one of Jesus' most well-known stories. As a child, you may have sung about the wise man who built his house upon the rock and the foolish man who built his house upon the sand. And the rains came down and the floods came up. And the wise man's house ... stood firm.



Wadi Rum, Jordan

And the foolish man's house ... went splat!

Israel is filled with sandy gullies and dry stream beds called "wadis". *Wadi* translates to *washes*. And that's because they're subject to violent flash floods that "wash" away everything in their path.

To this day wadis are deadly, because storms can rage beyond the ability to see or hear, and then send silent, raging, water through the wadi.



In Dubai, on the Persian Gulf, there's a water park called Wild Wadi.¹

One of the main attractions at Wild Wadi is the *Wadi Wash*, a 16,000 gallon flash flood that pours out of *Fossil Rock* every hour on the hour.



¹ You can find it at wildwadi.com

People wanted to settle near a wadi because of the subterranean water available for their wells. And when they did this, they had two choices: 1) Pitch their tent on the smooth, soft sand. 2) Chip and dig a foundation in the hard, rocky hillside.

- In other words, they could do what's easy or do what's right

The people who built on the sand weren't ignorant (they knew what a wadi was) but they *were* foolish and lazy. They'd say, "We'll dig that foundation *tomorrow*; when the sun's not so hot." Trouble is, you find lot of excuses and justifications to stay on that soft sand once you've settled there. But, the rain *will* fall, the wadi *will* come, and you'll be washed away.

Remember the trailer park (next to the Skagit River bridge in Mount Vernon), that flooded every time the river rose? After a flood new trailers would move into the park. And you had to wonder if they were thinking, "I'll bet that was the last flood ... ever." The city had to ban people from living there.



Mt. Eremos near Capernaum

This is the hillside, next to the Sea of Galilee, where tradition tells us that Jesus gave what has become known as the Sermon on the Mount. It has to be the largest concentration of classic instructional scripture in the New Testament.

- We are the salt of the earth, and a light to the world.
 - Let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No" be "No".
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- Adultery and murder are just as evil in our *thought life*.
 - Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you.
 - If someone strikes your cheek, offer the other as well.
 - Do not do your acts of righteousness to be seen by men.
 - Forgive others their sins; store up treasure in Heaven.
 - Do not condemn; first take the log from your own eye before picking at the speck in your brother's eye.

And on and on it goes. But, He finishes with this parable.

Jesus is at the height of His popularity. People are flocking to hear Him. They say that *nobody* speaks like this man! I'm sure they're nodding their heads and shouting, "Amen!" But, there's frustration in Jesus' heart because he knows that for many, if not most, of these approving, agreeing fans, His profound teaching will have no measurable, long-term impact. And so, at the end of it all, He says:

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. - *Matthew 7:24 NIV*

We need to hear, not only with our ears, but with our heart and our hands and our eyes and our mouth. And that takes effort. Luke adds four words in his version of the story:



He is like a man building a house, **who dug down deep** and laid the foundation on rock. - Luke 6:48 NIV

If you settle for the quick and easy, there's no digging required. But, actually practicing what He preaches will require you to dig deep.

If you want to stand firmly on the rock, you have to get beyond "sandy" Christianity to the bedrock faith. Not just knowledge, but faith reflected in action! Not just learning the Word, but living by the truth! Not just confession, but conviction and repentance!

On Christ the solid Rock you'll stand, to the degree that you put His words into practice in your everyday life. Only a dynamic walk with Jesus can overcome the emotional, relational, and physical wadis that flash-flood our lives.



Ever built a sand castle? They can look pretty impressive ... until the wave hits.

Then they rapidly erode and wash away because why? They're not fortified. So, they're not able to withstand the elements.



Is your marriage, your family, your career, your thought-life firmly anchored in the Rock, or loosely sitting on the sand? If you build on the sand you will be washed away.

We must beware of a gospel of addition without subtraction; the belief that I can add Jesus without surrendering self-rule! A friend told me about a truck with two bumper stickers: "WWJD" and "Follow me to Hooters". *That's* addition without subtraction.

Jesus closes His Sermon on the Mount with this parable, but He offers a warning immediately before He tells the story:

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. 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?" Then I will tell them plainly, "I never knew you." - Matthew 7:21-23 NIV

Five things kind of frighten me about this passage:

1. They say, "Lord, Lord" (they consider themselves *disciples*).
2. There are "Many" of these "*Lord, Lord*" people!
3. They speak and act like faithful followers: they "prophesy", "drive out demons", and even "perform miracles"!
4. And yet, He "never knew" them!

Notice that He doesn't say *they* didn't know *Him*; He says *He* didn't "know" *them*. They had never opened themselves to His Lordship. You can have the full show. But, if you're adding Jesus without surrendering to *His* will it's all sand and no Rock.

He says there's only one type admitted into Heaven:

"Only he who does the will of my Father"

And, the first aspect of doing God's will is yielding to His Spirit and surrendering to His Son as the Lord of my life. We have to take the step beyond just knowing Him:



We **know** and **rely on** the love God has for us. - 1 John 4:16a NIV

It's not enough to just know God's love. I must trust it to the point of surrender, and rely on it! That's when I know that *He* knows *me*. Obedience for the sake of obedience is lifeless. My obedience must be the manifestation of my reliance on His love!

True submission is the fruit of trust.

When I examine my own rebellion, I can see that when I willfully choose the foolish over the wise, it's because I believe that God is unfairly withholding the satisfaction that I crave. And instead of relying on His love, I distrust it.

But, then I come to my senses, and I repent and begin relying on His love once again. And I recommit to digging ever deeper and anchoring myself ever more firmly on the solid Rock.

Sometimes it doesn't require much of a storm to knock us off our foundation; sometimes all it takes is someone honking their horn at us to reveal the spiritual fortification of a sandcastle.

Some storms are destined to come, however, if He can't calm the storm, He'll calm the believer. There's an old saying: To realize the worth of the anchor you need to feel the storm.

When you feel the storm beat against *your* marriage, *your* family, *your* body, *your* job, *your* hopes and plans, do you typically stand firm or are you washed off your foundation?



Every storm provides us with an opportunity to see to what degree we've surrendered our self-rule to the Lordship of Jesus. The storm reveals the strength of the foundation.

And if it crumbles, I'm reminded to move from the softness of the sand to the safety of the Rock, and dig, dig, dig.