

# Our Place at His Place

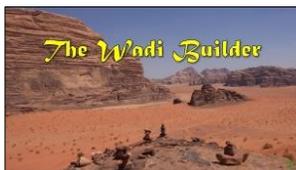
## *Digging Deep*

April 19, 2020

*We're learning to do what's right over what's easy!*

So, **what do you prefer: now or later?** What's your go to?

We're on a hillside above the sea of Galilee; and, Jesus just delivered His Sermon on the Mount (the largest single deposit of classic Jesus in the Bible):



Blessed are the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemakers. (Mt 5:7-9) You are the salt of the earth. (Mt 5:13, 16) Let your light shine. (Mt 5:16) Let your yes be yes and your no be no. (Mt 5:37) Turn the other cheek. (Mt 5:39) Don't pray like hypocrites. (Mt 6:2) Our Father who art in heaven ... (Mt 6:9) You can't serve two masters. (Mt 6:24) Don't worry about tomorrow. (Mt 6:34) Don't judge or you'll be judged. (Mt 7:1) Remove the plank from your own eye. (Mt 7:5) Don't throw pearls to pigs. (Mt 7:6) Ask, seek, and knock. (Mt 7:7-8) Do unto others as you'd have them do unto you. (Mt 7:12) And enter through the narrow gate. (Mt 7:13) For every good tree bears good fruit. (Mt 7:17)

He concludes with one of His best-known stories.

I received my earliest theological training from my godmother Doris who led children's music in the basement of Burlington Lutheran when I was five. Ever sing: *"The wise man built his house upon the rock?" "Oh, the rain came down and the floods came up ... and the wise man's house ... stood firm. ... and the foolish man's house ... went splat!"*

Jesus is at the height of His popularity. People are flocking to hear Him. They're nodding approval and shouting, "Amen!" Yet, He knows that for most, His deeply profound teaching will have no radical impact. So, He ends His Sermon by asking them ...

Why do you call me, "Lord, Lord," and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. – Lk 6:46-47 NIV

**[And then He says]** Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like ... – Mt 7:24 NIV

And, He closes with the parable of the wadi builder. Know what a "wadi" is? It's a sandy gully. And sometimes they're enormous. Can you find the car? Here it is! Now let's back out again. Golly, wha'da wadi gully!

Know what the word wadi literally means? "Washes". *Know why?*



They're dry most of the time; but, every once in a while when the rain comes down, a violent, silent, flash-flood comes up; and washes everything – and everyone – away.



There's a waterpark in Dubai, called the Wild Wadi. And one of the attractions is the "Wadi Wash", a 16,000 gallon flash flood.



So, why in the world would anyone wanna build in a wadi?! *Well ... well ...* a well. Wadis have sub-surface water. Plus, after a long, hot day of digging and pickaxing on the rocky hillside, **you get to sleep on the smooth, soft, sand.** Cool breeze. Drifting off. And *wake up!* New day. And that blazing sun is waiting. And, you're faced with mankind's oldest dilemma: **Do what's easy or do what's right?**



Those who chose to stay on the sand aren't ignorant, just foolish. They knew what a wadi was. But, **once we settle on sand, it's easy to rationalize staying.** "I'll dig twice as much *later*; when the sun's not so *hot*." And you occasionally, half-heartedly dig a little and chip away; **just enough to convince yourself the sand is temporary.** But, ever notice how **a temporary fix has a habit of becoming a permanent, albeit substandard, solution?** Thank you duct tape!



Problem with a wadi is, it's *not* a big deal ... *until it is*. What foundational or relational duty are you foolishly delaying?



**[James warns us]** Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. **[That's easy]** Do what it says. **[That's right]** – James 1:22 NIV

Because, **the sun's always hot and later never comes.** So, **what'll it be: now or never?** Because, sand is quick to offer justifications to sink in and stay, right up to the day "*the rain comes down and the floods come up,*" and **you wake up drowning in your dwelling on a seductive bed of betraying sand.** A few years ago, in our Chairable series, we taped this parable in an icy, December, rain storm. And it took a couple hours to film. By the end, **like so often with suffering, I was dealing with the misery of my own making.**



Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. **Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation and 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, and When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built because it had its foundation on the rock. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand without a foundation. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and The moment the torrent struck that house, it fell it collapsed with a great crash and its destruction was complete. – Mt 7:24-27; Lk 6:46-49 NIV**



Know what else was awful? Trying to lift that chair out of the water. Know what I learned? **You should take action before your seat is soaked!**

Luke includes a statement, that Matthew doesn't record, regarding the *doer* of Jesus' words.



He is like a **[wise]** man ... who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. – Luke 6:48 NIV



There's only One Foundation and One Rock; and they're one name is Jesus. Everything else is seductive sand and self-deception, just waiting to wadi you away.

Ever built a sand castle? Impressive! But, it doesn't take long for the waves to wadi them away.



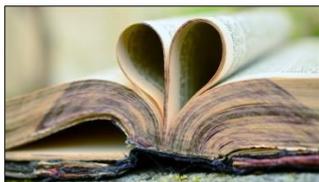
If your marriage, or family, or career is on the rocks ... it's probably been resting on the sand. **You can only stay on the sand for so long.** So, long before that wave hits, **we must continue digging deep, beyond "sandy" Christianity and surface level faith.**

**Don't settle for just learning it, but living it. You dig?**

**Don't settle for just confession, but conviction. You dig?**

**Don't settle for just attendance, but accountability. You dig?**

On Christ the solid Rock you'll stand to the degree that you dig into His Word and put His words into practice in your life. But, **many believers don't dig deeper for fear of facing what we're commanded not to do; because, they're bent on doing it.** They're not ignorant; they're foolish. Yet, when the inescapable collapse comes, they get mad at *God!*



So, beware of buying into a gospel of addition without subtraction; that is, **trying to add Jesus without surrendering self-rule!** A friend said he saw a truck with two bumper stickers: "WWJD" and "Follow me to Hooters". *That's* addition without subtraction.



Remember, **if our sins aren't washed away we will be.**

**[Just before this parable, Jesus said]** 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. – Matthew 7:21 NIV

Thankfully, **the Father put His will into words.** And, **He's put His Words in our hands.** John, who knew Jesus first hand, writes:

The man who says, "I know [Jesus Christ]," but does not do what he commands is a liar ... – 1 John 2:3-4 NIV

Because, **to know Him is to trust Him.**

So, whenever I choose the tempting sand over the solid Rock of my Salvation, in that moment, **I foolishly imagine that the Lord is unfairly withholding the satisfaction I crave.**

So, John can only conclude that **those who disobey don't trust;** and **those who don't trust don't know Him.** And I'll add that, **those who don't know Him haven't dug for Him.**

Storms are destined to come. But, **to know the worth of an anchor, we got'a face a storm.**

We're in one right now – a big one. **Sometimes He calms the storm. Sometimes He calms the believer.** The second scenario has far more eternal value than the first.

But, either way, **the storms reveal the foundation I've chosen.** Because, **peace isn't found in the absence of trouble.** It comes from having Jesus as our anchor, *especially in* the storm.

So, when the storm beats against *your* house, *your* family, *your* body, *your* plans, *your* dreams, **are you sunk or secure?** Sometimes it doesn't take much. An angry remark, a rude driver, or just a honk, can flash-flood our emotions and quickly reveal the spiritual fortification of a sandcastle.

**The storm also reveals the strength of my foundation.** Every storm provides us with an opportunity to *test* what we believe, and we get to see to what degree we trust the Lord. And if I crumble, I'm reminded to move from the softness of the sand to the safety of the Rock, and dig, dig, dig.

**We can't be perfect, but we can be obedient in our disobedience.** Because, part of obedience is acknowledging when we fall short, and recognizing our need for God's grace and mercy.

You can have the full show. But, **if you're adding Jesus without surrendering to His will, it's all sand and self-deception.**

[And] When Jesus had finished saying [all] these things, [in His Sermon on the Mount] the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, –  
Matthew 7:28-29 NIV

### **Is He *your* Authority?**

Only a dynamic walk with Jesus can offer peace and hope when the emotional, relational, and physical wadis flash-flood your life.

**Don't settle for sandcastles, or you'll collapse in the storm.**

**Now move your seat, before it weighs you down.**