Crossroads Church

5587 Redan Road

Stone Mountain, GA 30088

770.469.9069

The Sermon on the Mount, Part 31

Built on the Rock

Text: Matthew 7:24-27

In the previous sermon, I talked about the danger of a person simply picking up the language of the Christian faith and not entering into a relationship with Jesus. The verses before these which I just read remind us that not everyone who says to Jesus, "Lord, Lord" will enter the kingdom of heaven (v.21). Jesus constantly urged people to go beyond mere religiosity. He wanted them to engage the God who gave the Law, rather than simply memorize the Law. His desire for us in the 21st century is the same. Some are content to learn the clichés or join a church or hang out with followers of Jesus, but they don't want Jesus Himself! These people even listen to sermons and attend Bible studies and go to Christ-centered events. They just don't want Jesus running their lives. I can hear the objections now.

* "What does Jesus want? I'm listening to Him and His words. Isn't that enough?"
* "I've cleaned up my language. I don't use profanity anymore. Isn't that sufficient?"

You and I would agree that those are significant changes. These fringe folks have changed what they are *saying* and changed what they are *hearing*. Our text suggests that Jesus requires more. Apparently, saying "Lord, Lord" and hearing Jesus' teaching is inadequate for the serious follower of Jesus. There's a small word in verse 24 that is the key to understanding the desire of Jesus for us. The first clause of verse 24:

*Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine and DOES them...* STOP.

For Jesus, hearing and spouting words are not sufficient pilings on which to erect a foundation. No, action in response to Jesus is what constitutes an ordered life. This passage contrasts the life of obedience and the life of disobedience. Such a life is strong, stable and secure (v.25). The difference between the lives of these two builders in the parable or metaphor was a difference of foundation. The external environments were identical. The rain descended on *both* houses. Floods came to *both* houses. Winds blew and beat on *both* houses. The **only** difference is that one house had a better foundation than the other. In this text, I hear Jesus calling all of us to stop playing and stop aiming for the bare minimum of faith. I hear Jesus daring us to go down deep and build solid foundations so that we can stand when life's storms come at us. Some people go through a rough time and when you speak to them about how they are faring and how they are handling the struggle, they've got nothing of substance to say.

When the storms come, you can't start spouting bumper stickers, t-shirt slogans and coffee mug mottos.

It was in my college chapel that I was introduced to William C. Martin's 1902 hymn, called *My Anchor Holds*. It is a nautical metaphor that drives home the same point as does our text. We have to have something that doesn't bend and break when the strong winds come. Jesus likens that confident life to a person who has built a house on a firm foundation. William C. Martin used a boat-in-a- storm analogy. Listen to Martin's words.

1. *Though the angry surges roll*

*On my tempest-driven soul,*

*I am peaceful, for I know,*

*Wildly though the winds may blow,*

*I’ve an anchor safe and sure,*

*That can evermore endure.*

***Refrain***

*And it holds, my anchor holds:*

*Blow your wildest, then, O gale,*

*On my bark so small and frail;*

*By His grace I shall not fail,*

*For my anchor holds, my anchor holds.*

2*. Mighty tides about me sweep,*

*Perils lurk within the deep,*

*Angry clouds o’ershade the sky,*

*And the tempest rises high;*

*Still I stand the tempest’s shock,*

*For my anchor grips the rock.*

***Refrain***

3. *I can feel the anchor fast*

*As I meet each sudden blast,*

*And the cable, though unseen,*

*Bears the heavy strain between;*

*Through the storm I safely ride,*

*Till the turning of the tide.*

***Refrain***

4. *Troubles almost ’whelm the soul;*

*Griefs like billows o’er me roll;*

*Tempters seek to lure astray;*

*Storms obscure the light of day:*

*But in Christ I can be bold,*

*I’ve an anchor that shall hold.*

***Refrain***

*And it holds, my anchor holds:*

*Blow your wildest, then, O gale,*

*On my bark so small and frail;*

*By His grace I shall not fail,*

*For my anchor holds, my anchor holds.*

**Closing**

As I close, note with me the contrast and the call. In verse 21 there is a contrast between *saying* and *doing*. In verse 24 there is a contrast between *hearing* and *doing*.

The call upon you and me is to go deep. When you looked at both these houses in the parable, they looked identical. However, one builder was wise and one was a fool. The Greek word for fool is *moro,* from which we get the word *moron.* You have to go underneath the surface to see the strength of one house over the other. I call us all to bid "farewell" to superficiality and welcome deep thinking, deep praying, substantive holy conversations with others and an engagement of the Christ! May there be something beneath the surface in us. Solid rock. Tall pilings that go waaaaay down.

From the website of *Deltec*[homes.com](http://homes.com) (Asheville, NC)

*Deltecs are designed to work with nature, rather than against it. In over 47 years and over 5,000 homes built, we have never lost a home due to hurricanes or high winds of any kind. Our homes have stood against some of the most detrimental storms in history including Hurricanes Hugo, Sandy, Katrina, Ivan, Andrew and Charley, and the most damage our homeowners have experienced is a few lost roof shingles.*

That's quite a claim. I can go one better. My faith, my intimate, growing relationship with God through Jesus the Christ, has withstood some of the most detrimental storms of life, including death of loved ones, dissolution of my parents' marriage, temptations, traps laid for me by enemies, disappointments. Through it all, the worst I've experienced is a few lost hairs and some nights when I didn't sleep as many hours as normal. They weren't even "sleepless nights". How can this be?

I'm founded on the rock!!

Amen