

### **Built To Last – Mt 7:24-27**

It's been a great week of preparation for our ministry year kick-off

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday nights we made this a house of prayer, and Friday night it was a house of praise

And if you're visiting with us for the first time - welcome; My name is . . .

And our kick-off services each Fall are always a great time of anticipation for what God will do throughout the ministry year

Especially so as we focus on a new theme and a new series

- But before we get there, I want to make sure you're aware of a body life situation so you can pray  
Bob Techau, our Facilities Manager, fell off the roof Friday afternoon, and was *very* seriously injured  
He's currently in IA City where he underwent surgery Friday evening, and is listed in critical but stable condition; And he's scheduled to have surgery again later today  
As far as they can tell, he didn't sustain any head or neck injuries, but he has a lot of broken bones, and some major internal injuries that are cause for concern  
So I'd like to take a minute to pray for him, and ask God as a church, to intervene (pray)

I trust you'll continue to pray for Bob, and we will keep passing information along through our various ministries as we get updates

- With that in mind then, let's turn in our Bibles to Mt 7:24-27 (**Intro**)  
Our theme for the year is *Built To Last*  
Referring not to our Ford trucks if you're old enough to remember that, but our lives  
As followers of Jesus Christ, we have the opportunity to live a life that's built to last

And to flesh that out, we're going to look at 3 main *areas* of our lives over the course of this ministry year; Starting with money, and then parenting, and then marriage  
Discovering the biblical principles of each, and endeavoring to live them out more and better in our everyday lives

- But it starts with some *foundational* principles; Right here in Matthew 7  
Jesus is wrapping up his Sermon on the Mount, a message he started all the way back in Matthew 5, and basically gives us the bottom line here at the end

[24] "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. [25] And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. [26] And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. [27] And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

- I don't about you, but I can't read that passage without singing the children's song that's based on it; You know what I'm talking about?  
*The wise man built his house upon the rock . . . And the rains came tumbling down . . . The rains came down and the floods came up; And the house on the rock stood firm*

Meanwhile – *The foolish man built his house upon the sand; And the rains came down and the floods came up; And the house on the sand went splat*

And as a little kid, my buddies and I would do a body slam on the floor; It was a thing  
And though we're way too cool for that now, we're not above the truths; They still apply; The principles still hold; Namely, that we have a choice to make in life  
We can be wise and build a life that lasts, or foolish, and watch it crumble

It's a choice; Starting with this . . .

### **If you want a life built to last . . . (v24-25)**

If you want a "house" that matters, if you want your days to count, if you want to *endure* for the Lord, if you want to make an *impact* in the kingdom of God . . .

If you want to make the *most* of the life God has given you in Christ . . .

You need to first of all . . .

### **Expect storms and prepare for them**

That's the first principle we find here; Expect storms

As in struggles, hardship, *accidents*, heartache, and difficulty

Including the worst of them; Like death, and disappointment, disease, discouragement, defeat, division, divorce, and any other "d" you can come up with; They're all storms  
Represented *here*, by the rain, wind, and flood; V25 – *the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house*

As in pounded on it; Came against it; Threatened it

The very thing we feel about Bob; That's why it took the wind out of our sails as a staff yesterday, when we gathered to pray; The storm hit, and hit with a fury

And the verbiage here, implies that such storms are a *certainty*

Notice it doesn't say – *if* the rain falls, or *if* the floods come, or *if* the wind blows . . .

It says the rain *fell*; And the floods *came*; And the winds *blew*

Implying that it's not a matter of if, but when; Storms *will* hit in your life

And if you're going to last, if you're going to stand firm, if you're going to keep shining bright – you need to expect them

Especially so, b/c we live in a fallen world filled with fallen people; With Satan himself prowling about, seeking whom he may devour (1 Pet 5:8)

And then there's God's discipline from time to time, with storms of correction; Or his refining fire with storms of perfection; So no matter how you slice it . . .

Storms are inevitable in life; And if you don't expect them, you'll never be prepared

- We were in the Florida panhandle one year for vacation, when Hurricane Dennis was brewing in the gulf; But being on vacation, we were unplugged and had no clue  
We just thought the waves were like that all the time; And couldn't figure out why we were the only ones in the water, body surfing; Dumb

And it wasn't until we were driving to the mall that evening, and saw people nailing plywood over their windows, that we started to think something was up

And then, at the mall, which was strangely deserted, we overheard somebody mention "evacuation orders"; At which point we started asking a few questions

And realized in a hurry that we were *seriously* unprepared; We had very little gas in our car, no food, no water, and no clue what to do

All of which put us at significant risk; Especially when we had to wait in line that night at a gas station – one of the most tense situations I've ever been in

But we finally got some, and got out of town the next morning in the nick of time  
All b/c we didn't *expect* such a storm, and *certainly* weren't prepared for it

- If you want a life built to last, you have to *expect* storms, and *prepare* for them  
Not that you can prepare for the *shock* – the shock of hearing something so  
disheartening and concerning; But the hours, and days, and life that follows  
You *can* prepare for that; And you have to, if you're going to live a life that lasts  
A life that matters for the Lord; You have to prepare

Like Jesus said in **Lk 6:47-48**, using the same analogy in his sermon on the plain  
[47] *Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you  
what he is like: [48] he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the  
foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house  
and could not shake it, because it had been well built.*

If you're going to live a life that's built to last, you have to prepare; You have to dig deep,  
dig in, do the work, and base it on a *firm* foundation  
Kind of like the builders did with these structures; Take a look (**Video of lighthouses**)

- If you want a *life* like that, you have to expect *storms* like that; And then *prepare* for  
them; Basing your life on *the* Rock; And establishing your thinking on *his* thoughts  
And *clinging* to the truths of his Word and pylons of his grace – when the winds of life  
beat against your soul

I've been so encouraged by Vicki, Bob's wife in that respect  
She ends many of her texts with – *The Lord is my strength and shield, in him my heart  
trusts and I am helped.* (Ps 28:7); She's clinging to the pylons of his grace  
And we need to do the same; In *every* storm of life  
Otherwise we'll be washed up, washed out and devastated

That's the first principle we find here – expect storms and prepare for them, by  
embracing God's Word, and thinking his way

Here's the 2<sup>nd</sup> . . .

### **Listen to Jesus**

If you want a life that's built to last, listen to the *master* builder; Just like he says – v24  
“*Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them, will be like a wise man*”  
Meaning, you have to listen; You have to internalize what he says  
And not just the words here in the Sermon on the Mount, but *everything* he said;  
*Everything* he inspired; The *whole* Bible; You have to listen

Which means 2 things:

A. **Read his Word** – read what he says; Read the word that was inspired by his Spirit  
We talked about that a few weeks ago; And found that there's no substitute  
You have to open your Bible, read his words, and listen with your heart

B. **Hear it preached** – as in proclaimed, and explained, and illustrated, and applied  
That's what it means to hear the Word preached; And we need it; I need it  
I've never yet seen a person who weathers the storms of life, triumphs over sin, and  
lives righteously with any measure of consistency . . .

Who doesn't also expose themselves to the preaching of God's Word on a regular basis  
I've never seen it; And never will; B/c that's God's design for building us up

**Eph 4:11-12** says – *And he [Jesus] gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the  
shepherds and teachers [aka pastors and preachers], [12] to equip the saints for the  
work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ*  
It's God's design to have his Word *preached*, and it's our responsibility to *listen*\*\*\*\*\*

- I can't count the number of times I've heard a testimony like the one from Reese  
Saunders on the video  
Who walked in these doors, heard the gospel, and eventually gave his life to Christ  
And then built from there by *reading* his Word, and hearing it preached  
If you want a life built to last, do *that*; Listen to Jesus

And 3<sup>rd</sup> . . .

### **Do what he says**

Actually *do* what he says; That's the key; That's the emphasis in v24  
*Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them [hears and does] will be  
like a wise man who built his house on the rock.*  
Rock solid lives are based on obedience; Not that obedience saves you, but sanctifies  
you; *Reinforcing* your salvation like rebar in concrete

That's why **James 1:21-22** says . . .

*Receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. [IOW  
listen and internalize it] [22] But be doers of the word, and not hearers only,  
deceiving yourselves.*

If you think your life is built to last just b/c you read God's Word and hear it preached,  
you're sadly and tragically mistaken; And you're deceiving yourself  
Deceiving yourself into thinking you're a follower, when you're not; That the Word's  
*implanted* in your heart and soul, when it's not; That you're saved, when you're not

And if you *are* by the grace of God, you're *still* missing out on his blessing

B/c v25 says – *a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing*  
Implying that a hearer only, won't be\*\*\*\*\*

- Deceive yourself no longer; Miss out no more; Start *doing* what God says; Actually  
*live* his way; And *abide* in his truth; And *apply* his commands  
That's what Reese and Lisa did; They trusted God's goodness, they relied on his  
provision, they showed hospitality, and they welcomed the stranger  
The result of which, is that they're living a life built to last  
Not a life without storms, but a life that weathers them; And you can too; If you want to

On the other hand . . .

### **If you want a life destined to crumble . . . (v26-27)**

A house that's here today and gone tomorrow; A life sadly destroyed and quickly  
forgotten . . .

### **Expect bliss and do nothing**

Expect no trouble, no hardship, and no trials; And assume that the sunshine of today  
is *guaranteed* tomorrow; Just *presume* on God's grace that way; Take it for granted

Better yet, act like you're *entitled* to it; Act as though you *deserve* bliss; When really the exact opposite is true; When all we deserve is punishment, hardship, and hell  
But never mind that if you want a life destined to crumble

And when you happen to see the hardship of others, you know, storms breaking on the shore of *their* life – just assume that you're an *exception* to such things

- And whatever you do, *don't* make any preparations for anything other than bliss  
Better to just do nothing; At least nothing of any *kingdom* value  
Just sit back, sip tea, and eat bon-bons; Play as many video games and watch as much TV as you want; Neglect your soul, your mind, your loved ones . . .  
And everything else that matters for eternity

So that when a storm hits, you're not only devastated due to your unmanaged expectations, you're offended b/c you don't think you deserve it  
And therefore find your life in shambles all the more  
Just expect bliss and do nothing

2<sup>nd</sup> . . .

### **Listen to the world**

The world, referring to those who don't *know* the Lord  
Those whose minds are still blinded and hearts still hardened  
Those who live for themselves, and live for today

Just think *their* thoughts; And read *their* blogs; And soak up *their* teaching; And use *their* logic; And assume, just like they do . . .  
That you can handle whatever comes your way; No problem

- In fact, that's the first indicator that you've arrived in this respect; When you think . . .  
**"I can handle this"**  
"I've got it; No worries; I have money in the bank, money in my pocket, and plenty of support, purpose, and everything else I need"  
If you think that way, you're listening to the world, and well on your way to destruction

Or how about . . .

### **"This is all there is"**

"We evolved from nothing, and we return to nothing; The universe is simply the sum of its particles, and so are we; We have no soul, and the material world is all there is"  
"If God ever did exist, he's long dead, or inconsequential; This is it"  
If you think that, you're listening to the world; And ignoring the storms on the radar

Or how about this one . . .

### **"To each his own"**

"If it works for you, who am I to question it? If it's right for you, great; If it doesn't affect me, have at it; To each his own"  
If that's what you think, you're listening well; At least to the world

And last but not least . . .

### **"It's all about me"**

Life, money, work, friends, you name it – it's all about me; *My* needs, *my* wants, and my life

Fill your head with *that* stuff, and start thinking *that* way, and you won't *have* to listen to the world; You'll *be* the world; And well on your way to a life that crumbles

Expect bliss and do nothing, listen to the world, and finally . . .

### **Do what you want**

Eat, drink, and be merry; Live a totally self-absorbed, self-centered life – doing whatever you want

But whatever you do, *don't* do what Jesus says; B/c that would be foolish, and contribute even *more* to a life destined to crumble; V26

*[26] And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. [27] And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it* [it was complete, and everyone noticed it]. "

If you want a life destined to crumble, try as much as you can *not* to hear what God says  
And if you do, ignore it; Do what *you* want; Live your life *your* way; It's your life  
Don't concern yourself with what comes next, or what might happen if – just do what's expedient; Do what's easiest; Do what feels the best right *now*  
And it won't be long before your life looks something like this (**Video of crumbling**)

Do you think that any of those people *expected* their house to fall? Or planned on it?  
Heaven's no

Most of them just built their homes wherever and however they wanted, without any thought as to the consequences; Just like so many do with their lives  
In fact, I think people put *far* more thought into how they build their homes, than how they build their lives  
And there's nothing like a storm to reveal the quality of workmanship (**Questions**)

- So how about it? Are you wise? Do you *expect* storms, and listen to *Jesus*, and live *his* way?  
Or are you foolish? Expecting bliss, doing nothing, and living *your* way?  
The choice is yours; And not just today, but everyday  
Are you destined to crumble? Or built to last?

Prayer – Take a minute to assess your life in this respect; And if necessary, repent; Asking God to change your heart, and committing to live his way

Lord, we want to live a life that's built to last; So quicken our hearts and renew our minds every single day to that end  
We give now of our tithes and offerings, and simply ask that you multiply their impact to establish more and more lives on you