

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 10/2/94 PM
Matthew 7:24-27 "The Right Response to Jesus"

Order:

Message

Baptism

Communion

Intro: Many years ago, Shakespeare posed the famous statement, "To be or not to be, that is the question." Permit me to alter the classic quote a little. To be biblical, "To obey or not to obey, that is the question."

What is the right response to Jesus? That's a great question to ask in a service where we are observing both baptism and communion.

Perhaps the greatest sermon ever preached is the one Jesus preached to a crowd on a hillside in Galilee 20 centuries ago. We commonly refer to it as the "Sermon on the Mount," and can find it in Matthew 5-7. Tonight, for a few moments, I'd like for us to see how Jesus finished his sermon. In so doing, we'll discover the right response to Jesus.

The Sermon on the Mount is about "Kingdom Living 101." Jesus tells us what we are to BE as His disciples (Beattitudes), what we are to DO as His disciples (Similitudes). He lays out the standard for discipleship.

At the end of His sermon, Jesus offers us a test. He poses a series of contrasts. There are two options in each one. In the first contrast, there are two gates and two roads (13-14). In contrast two, there are two types of trees and two types of fruit (15-20). In the third, there are two professions and two destinations (21-23). This final exam is really a take-home test. You don't take the test for "Kingdom Living 101" in church. You take it in life.

Jesus actually finished His sermon with a story--a story about two builders. We know the story well. Yet the implications are lifechanging. Notice the contrasts as I read the story in vv 24-27, "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings..."

There are three contrasts.

I. There are two builders.

Jesus calls the one a wise man (24). The other He calls a foolish man (26). By the way, did you notice there are a lot of similarities between the two men. Both are builders. Both men actually built a house. The houses they built both looked good, at least when the weather was good. The walls looked nice, the roofs looked nice, the exteriors looked nice.

But there was one major difference. What was it?

II. There are two foundations.

Foundations don't usually attract much attention. The casual observer would not have even seen the difference. But foundations matter, believe me. Our house is a case in point. The back wall cracked. A structural engineer came and said, "This needs

attention." I asked him what would happen if we waited. He said the superstructure would start cracking next.

Foundations matter. The wise man built his house on a rock. In Luke's gospel, we're informed that the wise man actually dug deep to build his foundation on firm rock (Lk 6). The foolish man thought otherwise, "Why go to all that bother. This sand bar is easier to work with than rock. It'll do just fine."

Isn't it interesting that Jesus ended His Sermon, not on a note of joy, but with the sound of a crash? Which highlights the third contrast.

III. There are two results.

Everything was great until the storm hit. Both houses looked equally beautiful. But in Israel, dry wadis can turn into raging torrents overnight.

My first year in seminary, I worked for construction business. We were building condominiums in NW Grand Rapids. One day the crew I was with set the trusses, and left. That night, a storm hit. The next day, the trusses were in a pile, like fallen dominoes. What happened? They weren't braced well enough.

Do you know what a storm does? It reveals the quality of the builder's work. The wise builder's house stood. The foolish builder's house fell, and great was the fall of it.

Implications:

What's the point of the story? Think about something. We are all building a house, right now. My life is my house. Your life is your house. The question is HOW and WHERE am I building my house? Am I building my house on Christ, who is the solid rock, or am I building my house on something else, which is shifting sand?

There are two kinds of builders in life. There are two foundations on which we can build in life. And there are two potential results.

Life boils down to this choice. One is to hear and do. The other is to hear and not do. The first is the right response, the latter is the wrong response. Here's the bottom line. What have we done with Jesus Christ and His words?

Edward Mote penned the well known lyrics, "My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name. On Christ the solid Rock I stand. All other ground is sinking sand, all other ground is sinking sand."

A house on an unstable foundation is unstable. A house is only as stable as its foundation. A life is only as stable as its foundation. On what are you building your life?

You say, "How can I tell if Christ is my foundation?" According to the story, the trials of life reveal the strength of my commitment to Jesus Christ. I can shout in church that Jesus is #1 in my life, but the trials of life reveal whether He is or not. The house that is built on Christ stands. The other collapses.

Are you building your life on Christ or on something else?

Frankly, every Sunday thousands of people walk through church doors and listen to Jesus' teaching, just like we are tonight. They have good knowledge of what

Jesus taught. But they are like a California home in a mudslide. They have not made Jesus their Master in life.

Ezekiel ministered to a people just like that. Oh, they were intrigued by the Word of God. They loved to hear the Word. But that had a problem. What was it? God told Ezekiel what it was in Ezek 33:31-32 (NIV), "My people come to you, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice."

How about you? Are you building your life on Christ?

Jesus gave us two ordinances designed to help us make sure our lives are built on Him. The first is baptism. The other is Communion. These ordinances don't save us. Salvation is a gift. We receive this gift by admitting our need for it, by repenting of our sin, and trusting Jesus Christ. We become a Christian by believing that Jesus Christ lived a perfect life, died the death we deserved to pay for our sins, and conquered death three days later. Have you ever made that decision?

These two ordinances don't add to salvation. But they do serve as opportunities to take personal inventory to make sure Christ is the foundation of our lives.

Baptism is the public beginning of the Christian life. When we are baptized, we are publically identifying with Christ. We are saying to the world, "Christ is #1 in my life. He is my foundation. He is my Lord and Savior. I am building my life on Him and His words." Tonight, five individuals are saying just that. What about you? Have you ever been baptized, and declared to the world that Christ is your foundation?

As an ordinance, baptism takes place at the beginning of the Christian life. It's a one time act. But the Lord has given us another ordinance which serves as a regular, continual checkup. Communion. When we observe communion, we take time to reflect on our foundation. Am I building my life on Him? Is Christ at the center of my life? Am I following Him? Communion prompts us to remember Him, to remember that without Him we can do nothing.