

The Sermon on the Mount

"Building To Withstand Storms" (Matthew 7:24-27)

INTRODUCTION:

- I. 1964 was a bad year for earthquakes.
 - A. At 5:36pm, on March 27th, 1964, a geological phenomena known as a "MEGATHRUST," struck Prince William Sound approximate 78 miles east of Anchorage triggering a 9.2 magnitude earthquake.
 1. Anchorage sustained substantial damage and destruction to houses, buildings, and to the city's infrastructure, including paved streets, sidewalks, water and sewer mains, and electrical systems.
 2. Structural damage was extensive throughout the city, but especially in areas where hillsides crumbled and gave way. The ground under homes in Turnagain Heights gave way completely, causing many to slide downhill toward the Cook Inlet.
 4. Whole sections of land in the region subsided due to an earthquake phenomena known as LIQUEFACTION, which turns water saturated soil into mush – including this section of land known today as Earthquake Park.

5. Ground fissures and failures caused major structural damage Anchorage, including substantial damage to highways and the Alaska Railway line to Whittier and Seward.
 4. Areas around the head of Turnagain Arm at Portage dropped between 4 to 8 feet.
 3. Two hundred miles southwest, some areas near Kodiak were permanently raised by 30 feet.
 7. In Prince William Sound, a 27-foot tsunami that severely damaged Valdez, Whittier, Seward and Kodiak, killing a total of 106 people in Alaska coastal cities and villages.
- B. Less than three months later, on June 17th, 1964 a magnitude 7.4 earthquake struck Niigata (NEE-gata), Japan.
1. Most of the destruction in Niigata (NEE-gata) was caused by LIQUEFACTION, such as these apartment buildings built on sandy soil, and which literally sank and toppled on their sides due to massive ground swells.
 2. Bridges collapsed, buildings were destroyed, and over 3-thousand homes were reduced to rubble in seconds.
 3. The quake and the tsunami that followed killed 26 and injured 447.
- C. In a matter of minutes, lives can be changed forever by all kinds of natural disasters.

1. We've seen evidence of this in more recent times from numerous natural disasters that have struck this country in the form of storms – such as hurricanes and tornadoes.
2. Even with advance warning, nothing can protect property from being severely damaged or completely destroyed by these devastating storms.

II. Why am I mentioning all this?

- A. The reason is because Jesus had something to say about destruction in The Sermon on the Mount.

1. **Matthew 7:24-27** – *"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."*

- B. What did Jesus mean by all this? Why did He conclude The Sermon on the Mount with a lesson on the need to build on a solid foundation?

1. Jesus was contrasting those who HEAR and who DO the things He just taught, verses those who HEAR but do NOT do the things He taught.
 - a. Those who HEAR and who put into PRACTICE the things Jesus taught are WISE – they are like those who build on a rock solid foundation.
 - b. On the other hand, those who hear and do NOT put into practice the things Jesus taught are FOOLISH – they are like those who build on a foundation of sand.
2. You would think people would get the message about building where houses collapsed in the past due to poor soil conditions – but the fact is that people will often ignore events of the past and build on the very spots where disaster struck in the past.
3. The same is true in the spiritual sense.
 - a. Jesus has given warning after warning about the consequences of disobeying the eternal truths He revealed in this sermon.
 - b. And yet, people blissfully go through life completely ignoring the warnings Jesus gave.

- c. These are people who are DETERMINED to be THEIR OWN god – in a sense – doing what THEY please rather than seeking to do the will of the Father in heaven.
- C. So, let's focus our attention these concluding statements of Jesus and see what we can learn from the principle of HEARING and DOING the Lord's will.
 - 1. There are three questions I think we need to answer to properly understand what Jesus was saying.
 - a. First, we want to know what the "houses" of the wise and foolish builders represent.
 - b. Second, we want to understand something about the "storms" Jesus talks about.
 - c. And finally, we want to know how can we "build" so we can withstand those storms.

BODY:

- I. So let's begin by identifying the "HOUSES" Jesus was speaking about in this lesson. What do these "HOUSES" represent?
 - A. In the context of these verses, the "HOUSES" represent our lives.
 - 1. Each of us is building a life – a life that will eventually face all kinds of storms that will come in the form of various trials or temptations.

2. Not only that, but each of us is building our house on a foundation of one kind or another.
 - a. Our house will be a foundation based on the divinely inspired, eternal principles Jesus introduced to those who would be His disciples – the gospel of the Kingdom of heaven.
 - b. Or, our house will be built on the teachings, doctrines, or philosophies of men – teachings that are more acceptable to us than the teachings and commandments of the Lord.
3. We can't escape the fact that we're "builders."
 - a. The question is whether we are WISE or FOOLISH builders.
 - b. The test that will determine the KIND of builder we are will be the "STORMS" we encounter in life.

II. So, what are the storm Jesus was talking about?

- A. As in real life, storms are things that threaten our well-being.
 1. As we've already seen, these storms can be very real – such as hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, or other natural disasters that threaten us like earthquakes and tsunamis.
 - a. These disasters threaten to take from us things we consider to be of great value.

2. These storms are also figurative or symbolic, but just as devastating.
 - a. These storms can be the loss of our health or the loss of loved ones through death.
 - b. Storms can also come in the form of trials or temptations that can devastate us emotionally or spiritually.
3. Christians of the first century lived with the threat of these storms every day.
 - a. And some, like the apostle Paul, endured storms unlike anything we could even imagine: **2 Corinthians 11:24-28** – *"From the Jews five times I received forty stripes minus one. 25 Three times I was beaten with rods; once I was stoned; three times I was shipwrecked; a night and a day I have been in the deep; 26 in journeys often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils of my own countrymen, in perils of the Gentiles, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; 27 in weariness and toil, in sleeplessness often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness — 28 besides the other things, what comes upon me daily: my deep concern for all the churches."*

- C. How we respond to these STORMS reveals the quality of our HOUSE.
1. Will we be able to ENDURE and REMAIN FAITH?
 2. Or will the storms of life total us out emotionally and spiritually to the point where we simply give up and eventually lose our soul?
 3. The longer we live, the more "storms" we're likely to face.
 4. So, how can we be sure to build our lives so that we can withstand the storms of life?
- D. The key to withstanding the STORMS is to make certain we HEAR and DO the Lord's will.
1. Being a "HEARER" ONLY is not sufficient.
 - a. This is why Jesus said: **Matthew 7:26-27** – *"But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: 27 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."*
 - b. James, the Lord's brother, also warned about being just a HEARER and not a DOER of the word: **James 1:22-24** – *"... be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror;*

24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was.

2. Therefore, according to what Jesus taught in The Sermon on the Mount, we must not only HEAR, we must also DO what the Lord says.
 - a. This is why Jesus said: **Matthew 7:24-25** – *"Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: 25 and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock."*
 - b. This is why James, the Lord's brother, adds: **James 1:25** – *"But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does."*
3. To put it simply, those who DO what Jesus taught will be able to withstand the STORMS – whether we're talking about ACTUAL STORMS and DISASTERS, or whether we're talking about the trials and temptations of life.

- III. So, the only question that remains is how can we "build" so we can withstand those storms? In other words, how will the teachings of Jesus help us withstand these storms?
- A. First, the teachings of Jesus give us the right focus when it comes to life and the things we value in life.
1. This is why Jesus said: **Matthew 6:19-21** – *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; 20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. 21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."*
- a. Placing all our trust in earthly treasures will only result in disappointment – nothing is certain in life, not even amassing fortunes.
- b. We've seen in our own time just how quickly material treasures can vanish.
- c. Therefore, we need to be laying up treasures in heaven – which means simply living a life in obedience to the will of God – being obedient to the gospel of Christ.
- B. Second, following the teachings of Jesus will guarantee that we will always have the things we need – the necessities of life.

1. Jesus said: **Matthew 6:25-32** – *"... do not be anxious for your life, as to what you shall eat, or what you shall drink; nor for your body, as to what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body than clothing? 26 Look at the birds of the air, that they do not sow, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not worth much more than they? 27 And which of you by being anxious can add a single cubit to his life's span? 28 And why are you anxious about clothing? Observe how the lilies of the field grow; they do not toil nor do they spin, 29 yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory did not clothe himself like one of these. 30 But if God so arrays the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the furnace, will He not much more do so for you, O men of little faith? 31 Do not be anxious then, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'With what shall we clothe ourselves?' 32 For all these things the Gentiles eagerly seek; for your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things."*
2. This is why Jesus went on to tell His disciples: **Matthew 6:33-34** – *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you. 34 Therefore do not worry*

about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things.

Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

- a. When our treasure is in heaven, and when we are living a life where we are constantly seeking to do the will of our Father in heaven, we won't need to WORRY about tomorrow.
 - b. Some how, some way, the Lord will see us safely through the storms and provide us with everything we need.
- C. Third, following the teachings of Jesus will ensure us that we will CONTINUE to receive the good gifts God desires to give His children.
1. Jesus said: **Matthew 7:7-11** – *"Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. 8 For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened. 9 Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone? 10 Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? 11 If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!"*
 2. God is the source of all our blessings – both spiritual as well as material.

- a. But to CONTINUE receiving the blessings the Father has in store for His children, we need to be obedient to His will.
- D. And finally, being a HEARER and a DOER of the teachings of Jesus will help us stay on the right course that leads to heaven.
- 1. This is why Jesus said: **Matthew 7:13-14** – *"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. 14 Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it."*
 - a. It won't be easy, and not everyone will enter heaven.
 - b. But if we follow the teachings of Jesus we will not only be able to FIND the way that leads to life, we will be able STAY on course all the way home.

CONCLUSION:

- I. Where is YOUR house built?
 - A. Are you building your house on a rock or on the sand?
 - 1. Are you HEARING and DOING the things Jesus taught or are you merely HEARING, but NOT doing?

- a. Jesus has already told us that those who HEAR and who put into PRACTICE the things He taught are WISE – they are building their house on a rock solid foundation.
 - b. On the other hand, Jesus has also told us that those who hear and do NOT put into practice the things He taught are FOOLISH – they building on a foundation of sand.
2. As we mentioned earlier, you would think people would get the message about building where houses collapsed in the past due to poor soil conditions or places where they are in the direct path of storms – but the fact is that people will often ignore events of the past and build on the very spots where disaster struck in the past.
- B. Where do you want to be when raging storms suddenly appear on the horizon and head your way with swift destruction?
1. Would you rather choose a lifestyle or a way of living that puts you on the edge of potential disaster?
 2. Or would you rather choose a lifestyle that will not only be in keeping with the commandments of the Lord, but will enable you to weather any storm that may come your way.
- C. The only HOUSE that will stand is one built on the rock-solid foundation of Jesus Christ.

1. **1 Corinthians 3:10-11** – *"According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. 11 For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ."*

D. Is your HOUSE built on the foundation of Jesus Christ?

1. If you've come to Jesus Christ in complete faith and obedience, repenting of your past sins, and have been buried with Him in baptism for the remission of your past sins, then you have built your house on a rock-solid foundation – Jesus Christ.
2. But don't forget that Jesus said building on the rock is not only HEARING but also DOING the will of our Father in heaven – and the way Jesus worded this statement means that we must KEEP ON HEARING and KEEP ON DOING the will of our Father in heaven.
3. Therefore, if you haven't obeyed the gospel and been baptized into Christ, or if you haven't kept on hearing and doing the will of the Father in heaven after obeying the gospel, then your house won't stand the trials heading your way.
4. And most importantly, your house won't stand the ULTIMATE test of standing before the throne of Christ on judgment day.

5. Therefore, while the Lord has blessed you with another opportunity to do His will, why not take advantage of this opportunity and ensure your home in heaven today.