

Now, let's take a look at the parable he tells to cap off the Sermon on the Mount in verses 24–27. Note that when he says “these words” in verse 24, he's not merely referring to the words that follow, but everything he taught throughout the Sermon on the Mount up to that point.

Based on verse 24, what are the two qualities of wisdom?

Jesus says that it is not enough to hear his words, to study them closely, to memorize them. True Christ followers hear his words and act on them in obedience.

Take a moment to reflect on your spiritual life. Are you a doer? Or simply a hearer? Where are you struggling to obey God's Word?

How would you like to grow in your obedience to Christ?

Like verses 21–23, this parable should startle us as well. Jonathan pointed out that both the wise man and the foolish man looked good on the surface, heard the same words of Christ, and lived in the same community. Just like it's possible to do good works in the name of Jesus without actually knowing him, it's also possible to hear his truth and live foolishly never actually knowing him.

Based on the parable, what allows us to know the difference between the wise and foolish man?

In terms of outward appearances, both of these men probably looked like they had it all together. They each had a stable enough situation to build comfortable homes. It's only when the storm arrives that we're able to discern between the wise and the foolish.

Describe a storm that tested your spiritual life. What did it reveal about your foundation?

How would you like to respond differently in the future?

Storms are inevitable. We all face them at some point or another. That's why the foundation we build our lives upon is so crucial. God's Word keeps us afloat and helps us to wade through the flood waters when they come.

What are you doing to build your life on the rock of God's Word? How practically can you be more intentional about doing so in the days ahead?

As you reflect on past times of difficulty in your life, what would it have looked like for you to more fully cling to the Lord in that time instead of relying on your own strengths?

What can you do to cultivate that kind of dependence on God today so that when the next storm comes you will hold onto him all the more?

LAST WORD

None of us has faced our storms perfectly. Thankfully, our Father is both patient and gracious. He does not look down on those shortcomings as reason to withdraw. Instead, he paid for them by sending his Son to take our place on the cross and to lead us into new life through his resurrection from the dead.

Think back on those times when you tried to go it alone, but not with shame. Christ has paid for your failures. Instead, look back in order to learn how to better walk forward. Identify where you have built your home on a faulty foundation and ask the Lord to teach you how to rebuild it on the rock of his Word.

When you have the right foundation, you don't need to fear the storms. The rain will fall, the flood will come, the winds will beat against your home, but it will not fall. Take hope in that truth today. Dig deep and build your foundation on the rock of God's Word. And when the storm comes, hold onto your loving Father who will carry you through to safety.

GO DEEPER

The Go Deeper section has two potential functions. It can supplement your small group discussion by providing extra discussion material. We've highlighted a place where the following segment could fit in the Discuss section of the study guide.

But you can also use this section as a short devotional to carry you through the week until your next group meeting. Consider reading one section a day to deepen your study of the parable of the builders.

1. Belonging to Jesus

Read Luke 10:1–12, 17–20.

Who are the seventy-two? In what ways are they different from the “many” Jesus describes in Matthew 7:21–23?

In many ways, the scene concludes like the one we see at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, but the key difference lies in the fact that these seventy-two were disciples of Christ. They were not merely bystanders eavesdropping on his preaching. Rather they had committed their lives to him and were sent out to prepare the way for Jesus. In other words, he knew them, unlike the “many” in Matthew 7:21.

When the seventy-two return, what do they describe as the source of their joy (10:17)?

How does Jesus respond?

Like Jonathan said in the video, it's possible to create “genetically-modified” fruit. We also know from Scripture that it's possible to do wondrous works by drawing on power from sources other than God (Acts 19:13–16; Rev. 13:13–14). But Jesus makes it clear in these verses that even when great works are truly accomplished in his name, they are not to be the primary source of our joy.

Based on verse 20, what are Christ followers called to rejoice in?

The greatest miracle any of us could ever witness is having our hearts transformed by the gracious mercy of

God. More astounding than any authority we may possess or work we may perform is the fact that, by grace, our names are written in heaven.

Reflect on your spiritual life for a moment. What do you rejoice in?

What can you do to more fully rejoice in your belonging to Christ in the days ahead?

Our world measures success by what is visible, but God looks at our hearts. Belonging to him requires an internal transformation before anything can change on the outside. If your name is written in heaven, strive to make that the source of your joy. And if you do not know Jesus today, surrender to him. Stop trying to justify your life with a résumé of performance. Instead, rest in his finished work and rejoice as he leads you into new life.
