

"Build Your Life on Jesus" // Matthew 7:24-29 // The Sermon on the Mount

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Introduction

Open Bibles to Matthew 7:24-29

- **Illus.** James Clear, *Atomic Habits* (2018)
 - Problem #1 – “winners and losers have the same goal”
 - More important than setting goals is being able to achieve them –
 - **The key:** “*Every action you take is a vote for the type of person you wish to become.*”

Transition

- What I would suggest to you is that in our passage today –
 - Jesus likewise suggests to us that ***who we are becoming is the result of who we are and how we live today.***

Read Matthew 7:24-29

- As Jesus invites us to consider that ***who we are becoming is a result of who we are today***
 - I think there is a very clear call to action that we can take hold of this morning –

BIG IDEA: *Build your life on Jesus.*

Exposition // Matthew 7:24-29

CHOOSE THE WAY OF WISDOM

Imagery of two houses

- In this passage, **v.24-27**, Jesus uses this vivid imagery of two houses –
 - ***One that is built on rock and the other that is built on sand*** –
- In the Near East, the climate is little different than it is in the US –
 - In addition to hot/cold seasons, the NE experiences wet/dry seasons.
- And near the Sea of Galilee where the SotM was preached –
 - There were areas known as ***wadis*** –
 - Which were channels for water runoff that were wet in the wet season but dry in the dry season.

- When Jesus uses this imagery of the two houses – *one built on sand and the other on rock* – there’s no doubt he has this in mind.
 - The last place you’d want to build a house is on the sandy areas of one of these wadis –
 - Because ***even though it seemed dry for the moment, the rainy season would turn it into a river.***
- Jesus uses this metaphor to help us realize a fundamental truth about this life: **where and how you build your life matters.**
 - *Are you going to build your life on the rock? Or you are going to build your life on sinking sand?*
 - ***It might look no different – might seem ok – in the present, but it matters a lot for the future.***

Future Focus

- ***That’s because having a good grasp of things to come in the future is what it takes to choose the way of wisdom –***
 - You’ll notice in the Gospels that Jesus speaks about the future very often.
 - *And I think He does that for two reasons –*
- First, Jesus calls us to think wisely about the future ***to shape our imagination.***
 - And I don’t mean imagination as in *making things up – but imagination in the sense that he calls us to envision His future and His Kingdom –*
 - He draws our minds upwards to have a Kingdom-shaped vision for our world and our lives.
- We’ve seen this all throughout the SotM –
 - Just like the adage “*How to teach a man to fish? Teach him to long for the sea*”
 - By setting our minds on what is to come, ***Jesus graciously invites us to imagine His future –***
 - ***And instills in us a vision for how that shapes our lives here and now as we live for His Kingdom.***
- But, He also teaches us to think wisely about the future so that we recognize that ***one thing always leads to another.***
 - We’re warned all the way through the SotM to ***be wise in our living –***

- ***And to recognize that our lives are building towards something.***
 - Whether it is the right thing is the question at hand.
- But it's not just a matter of what happens in the future. **The things to come are meant to shape our present lives –**
 - *Jesus teaches us to always be thinking about this fork in the road as if it's right in front of us –*
 - ***TODAY, will I choose the way of wisdom or will I choose the way of foolishness?***
- **Illus.** "Where are you going" on road
 - ***Wisdom causes us to recognize that every turn means something about who we are becoming.***
 - Because who we are becoming is a result of how we live ***today.***
- So, let me pose this question to you this morning: ***if you were to take stock of your life and really examine your heart... what are you living for?***
 - When you think about the two builders, ***are you thinking about the foundation of the life you're building?***

- ***Or are you stuck just pursuing whatever flavor of the week makes you happy?***
- Friends, we have a problem being wise with the way we live because we ***are prone to not think of consequences.***
 - **Illus.** parents teaching kids not to do something they don't understand
 - ***Why do we do this as parents? BC through wisdom we have learned that there are consequences that they might not yet see.***
- And that's exactly what Jesus is wanting us to see here – ***he wants us to take honest stock of our life and really ask ourselves what kind of life we are building.***

Invitation: The Way of Wisdom

- And the invitation is so clear in **v.26-27** –
 - ***The invitation is to not be a fool and build on a bad foundation.***
 - But to instead ***think wisely about this life – see a vision for why the things we do matter and how they shape who we are becoming.***

- And it's in this that we ***build our life on the firm foundation – we build our life on Jesus – by choosing the way of wisdom.***
 - *But I think we'll see this idea get down to the ground level because when we choose the way of wisdom that means...*

STRIVE FOR OBEDIENCE ALWAYS

- Look at the pattern of **v.24** and **v.26** –
 - Who is the fool?
 - The fool is the one who hears the words of Jesus & does not do them.
 - Who is the wise builder?
 - The one who ***hears and does.***

Centrality of Obedience

- When we come across this text, we can't miss the ***centrality of obedience.***
 - Our call to follow Jesus to isn't just a wise philosophy for life – it's not a self-help book for the masses...
 - ***It's first and foremost a call to follow Him in obedience.***

- I would add, by the way, that this isn't only the center theme of this passage – ***It's the very heart of the SotM.***
 - From the time Jesus ascends the mount in **Matt 5:1** to the time he concludes –
 - ***Jesus is calling his people to follow Him in a way of radical obedience called discipleship.***
- But look at this... I think if we really consider what Jesus says here, we might be surprised.
 - Because, according to Jesus, ***wisdom isn't based on knowing what is right, wisdom is based on doing what is right.***
 - Don't miss this. *Because we often reduce wisdom to having knowledge or discernment...*
 - **We think of wisdom being a matter of the mind, but NOT of the heart and hands.**
- **Illus.** "couch coaches"
 - ***Just because you know the right play, or you think they made the wrong decision doesn't make you a good athlete.***
 - *Knowing the right thing isn't the same thing as actually doing the right thing in the moment.*

- In the same way, you can know what is the “right thing”. You can know God’s Word or even have it memorized from cover to cover.
 - If I asked you to spout of some truths about God’s Word, you could write me a systematic theology... ***but friends, none of that matters.***
 - ***You aren’t walking in wisdom until you do what Jesus says.***
 - Why? Because wisdom isn’t the key to life.
 - ***Wisdom teaches you to know the way of life from the way of destruction.***
 - Jesus tells us to ***BE WISE*** not as an end itself, but as a means to an end – ***that end is that we would know Him and walk in Him faithfully, recognizing that only in Him is the life and flourishing we long for.***
 - *In other words, wisdom isn’t a call to be smart or make good decisions.*
 - ***Wisdom is the wherewithal to DO –***
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- Hear and Do
- That’s why Jesus says we can’t just be ***hearers***. We must be ***doers***.
- **v.24** says it is the wise man who ***strives for obedience always.***
 - ***The wise man builds his life on Jesus because he knows it is the only way to life.***
 - **v.26** the foolish man does the opposite.
 - ***The foolish man does what works for the moment and doesn’t consider that His actions actually are destructive.***
 - **v.27** says “great” was the fall because of it.
- This picture of two paths really makes us think about where we are.
 - Because I think, if we’re honest, we like to believe the best version of the story we can tell about ourselves.
 - We like to remember all the things we do for God... but we’d rather hide away those areas of our life where we aren’t obedient to Him.
 - Maybe for you, you have a sin struggle you’ve been dealing with for a long time –
 - *Or maybe you haven’t been dealing with it at all and you’ve just been wishing it away with hopefulness and positive thinking.*

- **When we think about the sin in our lives, we can become so short-sighted.**
 - We can lose sight of reality as we try to detach from the not-so-pretty parts and convince ourselves things are better than they are.
 - ***We like to be comfortable in our sin rather than be honest about it.***
- ***That way is short-sighted because it does not think wisely about the consequences of sin.***
 - It's not wise because it ***sidelines the very thing Jesus is calling us to...***
 - And that is **obedience**.
- ***The most appropriate response to the call of Jesus in the SotM is to follow Him.***
 - Not just to be inspired by Him, not be motivated by Him...
 - ***But to actually follow Him in whole-hearted obedience.***
- So, let me ask you this question: ***where do you need to strive for obedience right now?***
 - ***If you were truly being honest with yourself and paying attention to your heart – I know that everyone listening could identify some places in your life where you are settling for foolishness.***

- *I know everyone has some area of your life where you are diligently gathering supplies for that house that you're building on sinking sand*
- ***The invitation for you this morning is stop building what is killing you.***
 - The invitation of this passage is to see what you're doing to yourself. To see disobedience to Jesus for what it is.
 - ***And to take hold of the gracious call of following Jesus in obedience***
- ***Jesus invites you not to just be inspired by Him, but to be changed by Him.***

Virtue Formation

- We live in a world that is fast-paced and time is a demanding resource.
 - We want things quickly... ***but Jesus isn't calling us to look for one-time solutions.***
 - ***He's calling us to a lifetime of striving for obedience to Him known as discipleship.***
- What that means as that we will be a people who ***every day _ choose to build our house on the rock... choose to build our lives on Jesus.***

- It means that **every day** we're pursuing virtue. Virtue simply means **a consistent, practiced wisdom**.
 - *It's the way we take the "knowing what is right" part of wisdom and join it with the "doing what is right".*
- **Illus.** muscle memory
 - In the same way, **Jesus instructs us to know what is wise from what is foolish so that when we see it... We'll know where we need to be building.**
- So, in order to build our life on Jesus, that's going to be true of us. **That we're going to strive for obedience always.**

BE A FOLLOWER, NOT A FAN

- As we just looked at, the very center of the SotM is this call to obedience.
 - **Jesus isn't just a philosopher meant to be admired. He's a King to be obeyed.**
 - That should change how we live.
- In order to take this call to **build your life on Jesus seriously...**
 - I want to examine a character you might have missed in these verses: **the crowds**

- *I'd challenge you to think about this: but I think the crowds are one of the most important characters in Matthew's Gospel.*
- **v.28** "And when Jesus finished these sayings, **the crowds were astonished at his teaching**"
 - We might hear that and think "that sounds like a good thing" ...
 - **But it was the "crowds" in this narrative who turned into the bloodthirsty mob who demanded Jesus' execution (Matt 26:55)**
- Charles Quarles points out that **the crowds are a depiction of those who did not respond to Jesus faithfully.**
 - Yes, they were fans of Jesus. They were amazed by his teaching... **v.29** says they even recognized his authority.
 - **But they didn't know Him.**
- The crowds were fans of Jesus, but they weren't His followers. How do we know?
 - **Because the difference between those who hear and those who truly hear isn't about what they "take in", but how they live as a result.**
 - This should challenge us –

- To stop just being inspired by Jesus and start being changed by Him.
 - ***To move from a place of being a fan of Jesus to actually be following Him.***
 - This is what it means to build our lives on Jesus –
- **We have to move from decorating our lives with things about our Faith –**
 - ***And make the wise effort of building our lives on the firm foundation.***
 - _The only thing that will hold in the end are those who built their lives on the firm foundation of Christ.
- That's a sobering reminder for us this morning... ***because you've heard what Jesus says in the SotM, but what separates you from someone who rejects Christ altogether?***
 - The thing that will separate the wise from the fools isn't a matter of what we know in our heads –
 - It isn't a matter of mental assent towards this story of the gospel.
- ***It's a matter of hearing the call of Jesus and becoming obedient to Him with our lives.***
 - It's a matter of moving from the place of fan to follower –

- ***And day by day searching our hearts & lives for what it means to follow Him more faithfully today than we did before.***

Application

- In closing, I want to invite us to take hold of exactly what Jesus says here:
 - ***I want to set our mind on the things to come. You can take one of two ways in this life. You can build your house on sand, or you can build on the firm rock.***
 - But this isn't just an idea for the future. Jesus calls us to see that ***who we are becoming is the result of who we are today.***
- The invitation of this passage isn't to make up our minds of what will be in the future –
 - ***It's to prepare for that future by building our lives on Jesus TODAY.***
 - ***So, what are you building?***
 - Is it a life on Christ?
 - Or a sandcastle?
- **GOSPEL INVITATION:**
 - **To see the way of life and take it.**