

Walking in the *Foot Prints* of Jesus

A Discipleship Journey



Sermon on the Mount

Week 32

Storm-Proofing for Life

Matthew 7:24 - 27

Opening Prayer:

I Praise You for this Resurrection Madness

Lord of such amazing surprises
has put a catch in my breath
and wings on my heart,
I praise you for this joy,
too great for words,
but not for tears and songs and sharing;
for this mercy
that blots out my betrayals
and bids me begin again,
to limp on,
to hop-skip-and-jump on,
to mend what is broken
in and around me,
and to forgive the breakers;
for this YES
to life and laughter
to love and lovers,
and to my unwinding self;

for this kingdom
unleashed in me and I in it forever,
and no dead ends to growing,
to choices,
to chances,
to calls to be just;
no dead ends to living,
to making peace,
to dreaming dreams,
to being glad of heart;
for this resurrection madness
which is wiser than I
and in which I see
how great you are,
how full of grace.
Alleluia!

Reflection

The past few week's scripture passages and reflections have reminded us that Jesus always presents us with a choice. This week continues the lesson:

Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the rock; and the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat upon that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. And every one who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house upon the sand; 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.

Matthew 7:24 - 27

For those who have never built a house, the basics steps are: dig until you hit something solid, lay the foundation, and build the house on top. In our Scripture passage above, both men dug until they hit something solid and both built the house. Where they differ, obviously, is in the foundation that they chose to put down: one chose rock while the other chose sand. Of course, when storms came, the house built on sand collapsed while the house built on rock stood strong.

To help with our understanding of what Jesus is trying to tell us, let's look at the story and its metaphors piece by piece. Underneath both foundations is something solid; that something is God. God is the source of our being, the very breath we breathe. There is nothing we can do to earn or take away His great love for us. So, both men in our story are beloved children of God and have His love as their solid base. The house, of course, represents our lives. The houses in our story above appear to be basically the same; the casual observer probably wouldn't have noticed any significant difference between them. That leaves the foundation - the foundation of our lives, which is ultimately our relationship with God. When that relationship is solid as rock, we can withstand everything life throws at us. But when that relationship is soft, squishy, and shifts with the wind, the smallest squall brings us down.

So how do we get and maintain a solid foundation? Faith, yes. But faith tends to be ethereal, a word we use all the time but maybe can't really describe. Perhaps another word that might be more helpful is trust. Trust in God enables us to let go of our fears and our need to control and surrender to the events around us. Trust gives us the knowing that God will always watch over us, transforming any death into life (as the Resurrection assures us). From that place of deep trust, prayer becomes automatic. In the words of Franciscan Sister Ilia Delio, "to trust in the power of God's grace through darkness, isolation, bitterness, and rejection is to be on the way to becoming prayer...To pray is to be open to the new, to the future in God."

Now, for most of us, trust doesn't always come easy or quickly. But by choosing to follow Jesus' teaching in the Sermon on the Mount and continuing to pray for God's grace, we gradually transform our foundation of sand into rock, bit by bit, storm-proofing ourselves against all of life's challenges.

Reflection Question: When I mix in some additional trust in God how will my foundation become more storm-proof?

Closing Prayer

Speak to Jesus about what is on your heart, then rest in silence for a few moments listening for His response.