



19 Minutes With the Messiah

The House Built on the Rock

(Matthew 7:24-27)

²⁴[Jesus said,] "Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

1. Jesus' words in this lesson serve as the conclusion to his most famous sermon, the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Take a few moments to discuss Jesus' earthly picture of the two houses, the two methods of building, and the two outcomes.
2. The phrase "these words of mine" refers to the entire Sermon on the Mount, a sermon in which Christ focused on the life and conduct that God demands. Discuss the following statements from Jesus' sermon. Can you think of other statements that he made in this sermon?
"Do not murder. . . . Do not commit adultery" (Matthew 5:21,27).
"Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you" (Matthew 5:42).
"Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matthew 5:48).
"Do not judge, or you too will be judged" (Matthew 7:1).
3. What effect will the demands of the Sermon on the Mount have on the heart of the spiritually "wise man"? On what (or whom) will the "wise man" be led to build "his house," that is, his life?
4. How will building on "the rock" shape one's everyday life? (See verse 24.)
5. After hearing the Sermon on the Mount, on what "sand" will the spiritually "foolish man" build "his house"? Give examples of other "sand" on which the spiritually foolish might build their lives.
6. What storms may touch the earthly lives of all people? What is the ultimate and final storm?

Jesus' Body as the Temple
The Living Water
New Cloth
New Wine in Old Wineskins
The Salt of the Earth
The Light of the World
▶ **The House Built on the Rock**
The Two Debtors
The Sower
The Weeds
The Growing Seed
The Mustard Seed
The Yeast
The Hidden Treasure
The Fine Pearl
The Net
I AM the Bread of Life
Becoming Childlike
The Unmerciful Servant
I AM the Light of the World
I AM the Gate
I AM the Good Shepherd
The Good Samaritan
The Friend at Midnight
The Rich Fool
The Wise Servant
The Barren Fig Tree
The Great Banquet
The Lost Sheep
The Lost Coin
The Lost Son
The Shrewd Manager
The Rich Man and Lazarus
The Unworthy Servants
I AM the Resurrection and the Life
The Persistent Widow
The Pharisee and
the Tax Collector
The Workers in the Vineyard
The Ten Minas
The Two Sons
The Wicked Tenants
The Wedding Feast
The Fig Tree
The Householder
The Ten Virgins
The Talents
The Sheep and the Goats
A Lesson About Foot Washing
I AM the Way
I AM the True Vine
The Woman in Labor
I AM the Alpha and the Omega

7. How will those who build their house "on the rock" and those who build "on sand" fare in the storms of life and especially in the ultimate, final storm?

For Further Study

8. "On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand" (*Christian Worship* [CW] 382). How will this truth serve as a comfort in life and in death?

9. Discuss each of the following statements:

- From the street, the house of a believer and the house of an unbeliever may look identical.
- God rewards the good works and obedience of his people.
- An unbeliever can never correctly understand the Sermon on the Mount.
- Even Christians are tempted to build their house "on sand."

Helps: (1) The builder of the first house was careful to dig down to the bedrock and to lay the home's foundation on that solid surface. The second builder simply placed his house on the ground, subject to erosion. The two houses may have looked identical and would each have been serviceable in good weather, but only the one that was built on the rock would survive a storm. The other would collapse with "a great crash," most likely killing its owner. (2) God demands perfect obedience in thought, word, and action to all of his commandments. He demands that all people be perfect in love and charity and that they never judge the hearts of others. (3) God's law reveals damning sin. The spiritually wise will heed the law's message, repent, and build their life and hope of salvation on the solid rock of Jesus the Savior. (4) Christians respond naturally to God's grace in Christ by hearing Jesus' Word and putting it into practice in their daily lives. (5) The spiritually foolish (that is, unbelievers) will see the Sermon on the Mount as a moral code. Rather than allowing the law to show them that they are condemned sinners, the foolish will strive for obedience to the law in an effort to gain salvation through good works. Every system of work-righteousness and every man-made religion is sinking sand, leading to eternal ruin. (6) Answers will vary. All people will face the ultimate and final storm of God's judgment. (7) Christians may encounter storms in life that are even more severe than those faced by unbelievers, yet Christians are never without God's presence, protection, and power. Unlike unbelievers who will be destroyed at the time of God's judgment, Jesus will bring Christians through that storm unharmed. (8) In life and in death, Jesus is a solid rock—unmovable, unchanging, and faithful in his love, mercy, compassion, salvation, etc. (9) Outwardly, the lives of believers and unbelievers may seem identical—filled with good, decent, and respectable words and actions. The difference is the heart of the believer who has built on Christ the rock. God promises to reward the good works and obedience of his people. This reward, however, is not earned but, like salvation, is a gift of God's grace. Because unbelievers are spiritually blind, they will never understand the Sermon on the Mount as anything more than a handbook that will help them develop a worldly righteousness. Christians will be tempted to do the same, because the natural religious inclination of every person is that of trying to earn God's favor through good works—a house built on sand.

Prayer

Lord,

"My hope is built on
nothing less
Than Jesus' blood and
righteousness;
I dare to make no other claim
But wholly lean on Jesus' name.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

His oath, his covenant and blood
Support me in the raging flood;
When ev'ry earthly prop
gives way,
He then is all my hope and stay.
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand."
All glory and praise to his saving
name! Amen. (CW 382:1,3)