

Overview: Jesus satisfied God's demands for perfection. His righteousness is ours by faith. We dare not accept any substitutes, even if they are cleverly disguised in Jesus' name.

Suggested Service is Service of the Word (CW p. 38).

Suggested Hymns: 191 "Father Most Holy, Merciful, and Tender"

382 "My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less"

416 "How Firm a Foundation"

538 "The Church's One Foundation"

Prayer of the Day: O God, you rule over all things in wisdom and kindness. Take away everything that may be harmful and give us whatever is good; through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

First Lesson: Deuteronomy 11:18-21, 26-28 God's Word is essential to the spiritual welfare of people. That is why he commands us to make it the guiding principle in our thoughts and actions, our coming and going. God's word is the greatest inheritance we can give our children. Here God is speaking about his holy law. We can avoid God's anger and enjoy God's blessing by keeping his commands. This, of course, is impossible for sinners to do. Only when we despair of our own efforts are we ready to turn to our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Psalms is Psalm 78 (CW p. 95) God's Word keeps his commandments before our eyes and recalls his free and faithful deliverance through all generations.

Second Lesson: Romans 3:21-25a, 27-28 All of us have fallen short of the righteousness God's law demands. By that standard all of us are eternally condemned. Nevertheless, God provided a way of righteousness that has nothing to do with our obedience to God's law. Far from ignoring our sins, God punished them with Jesus' death on the cross, declared all of us just, and set us free to live with him forever. Just as Christ's righteousness creates the faith that is required to embrace it, even so, it excludes all self-righteous boasting.

Verse of the Day: Alleluia. Your Word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. Alleluia.
(Psalm 119:105)

Gospel: Matthew 7:15-29 Faith is only as strong as the truth on which it rests. The fatal attraction of false teachers is that they adorn their soul-destroying falsehood with our Lord's name and his divine credentials. Jesus will finally expose them as the evildoers they are. If his teaching is not in accord with the words of Scripture, we must reject him. Only faith built on Jesus Christ, the Rock, can withstand the tempests that the powers of darkness have unleashed upon our world.

Prayer: CW p. 127 or p. 42. Lord's Prayer: CW p. 43.

MATTHEW 7:15-29

ASCENSION

6/14/2020

BUILD YOUR LIFE ON A FIRM FOUNDATION

PENTECOST 2

MY DEAR CHRISTIAN FRIENDS,

Picture for a moment yourself on Judgment Day. There you are before the throne of the Almighty God. There also is everyone you have ever known or ever will know. There is Jesus Christ who will judge. Jesus will judge you and everyone else there. Certainly you are wondering as you picture this scene: how will the Lord of heaven and earth judge me?

After reading the first portion of our text for today, no one of us can feel too secure about the Day of Judgment. Jesus very plainly says: *“Not everyone who says to me ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven.”* Included in those who would not enter heaven are some who prophesied in Jesus’ name, some who drove out demons in Jesus’ name, and even some who performed many miracles.

What are the prospects of you or me entering heaven when such as these may not enter heaven? What are the chances for you and me to spend an eternity in heaven when such as these are called evil-doers by the Lord himself. If people who have done such great things in the name of the Lord stand condemned by the Savior, where will you and I stand on the Last Day?

I could not help but to think of some of the more popular preachers and television evangelist as I read these words of our text. They are busy prophesying and driving out demons and performing miracles. They are busy collecting money and building huge castles in the name of the Lord. They are building mega churches and gathering huge audiences. Could they possibly be included among those of whom the Lord is speaking here? Could it be that they will be rejected by the Savior they profess to be serving?

Maybe so; but we are not here today to talk about or to pass judgment on the eternal welfare of popular preachers and television evangelists. In fact, we hope and pray that even through their work the Almighty God might bring some people to know their only Lord and Savior. No, we are not here to talk about them. We are here to talk about you and me and about our relationship with the Lord. It is your and my spiritual and eternal welfare that we are here to talk about today.

The parable that Jesus speaks in our text addresses you and me. The point is very simple. As we build our life and our faith here on earth, as we build our hopes and dreams, and as we look to the future—we want to build on a firm foundation. BUILD YOUR LIFE ON A FIRM FOUNDATION.

Actually, we could make this point in several ways. Be wise and don’t be foolish. Hear the Word of God and put it into practice. Do not trust in your own works, but in the work of the Lord. It is not the sincerity of your faith that counts, but there certainty of your faith. Build your life on a firm foundation.

In the parable in our text, Jesus pictures the wise man building his house on rock. He dug down and put his foundation on solid rock. When the winds came and the storms blew, they beat against his house. The house stood firm because it was built on a solid foundation.

Meanwhile, the foolish man built his house on the sand. When the rains came and the winds blew, the house fell with a great crash. There was no way that house on that foundation was going to stand.

The wise man who builds on rock is like a man who hears the Word of God and puts it into practice. The foolish man is like the one who hears God's Word, but does not put it into practice. It was James who encourages us in his epistle to be doers of the word and not hearers only.

Now we know that if we were building a house, we would want a good, firm, solid foundation. Well the house that we are talking about today is this house right here—our bodies, our temples, and our dwelling place. This is where we live. We live in these bodies. We are the ones who are to be wise in the building of our lives on a firm foundation.

Building on a firm foundation means hearing the Word of God and putting it into practice. The foundation is the Word of God. The building up of this body and of this life is putting that Word of God into practice. If you neglect the Word of God, then you have no foundation on which to build your life. And if you do have the Word but you do not put it into practice, then you are like the foolish man who builds on the sand.

The foundation of the Word of God puts you squarely in touch with Jesus as your Savior. By the Word of God you know that you are a sinner. You know that you deserve nothing but God's punishment for whatever you have built in this world. But by the grace of God, you have a Savior in Jesus who takes away all your sins and restores your life to a building that is acceptable before God. Jesus is the Rock of our salvation. That is where you want your solid foundation to be.

We all know what the wise thing to do is. We know that we should be building our life on a firm foundation. Yet, it is not always that easy. We know that we should build on the solid foundation of the Word and on Jesus as our Savior, but by nature we want to build in the sand.

We know we ought to read our Bibles more, but we find other things to do. We know that we ought to worship our Lord and Savior at every opportunity, but we find other things to do. We know we ought to give thanks to the Lord for all of his blessings; but by nature we like to take credit ourselves for everything that we have; and we want to do whatever we want to do with whatever we have.

We know we ought to build our lives on the rock of Jesus and his Word and his righteousness, but our sinful nature wants to play in the sand. May God forgive us and restore in us a right relationship with Him that we might begin each day building our lives on a firm foundation of Christ and his Word.

Build your lives on a firm foundation. When things are going well, we tend to forget about God and his Word and his blessings. Sometimes we take for granted the fact that Jesus is our Savior. The foundation in life isn't so important when things seem to be going fine. That's just the way it is in our text. During the dry season and when the wind didn't blow, the foundation wasn't important. Who cared if you built on sand as long as there weren't any storms or wind or rain?

We all know that life is not like that. There are storms in life. There are winds of change, violent winds of anger and discontent. There are rainy days when it seems like the problems in life are going to sweep

us away as in a flood. This is when our foundation is all important and makes a difference in our life. This is when we know and realize the importance of building our life on a solid foundation. This is when it becomes evident whether we've built on sand or on Christ, the solid Rock.

Like solid rock, the Word of our God stands firm and unmovable. Like rock, God is steadfast and never changes. That's the kind of base we need for our lives. That is the kind of foundation that will enable us to withstand all the storms of life. That's the building that will endure the troubles and the hardships of life; and the times when things aren't so smooth and easy. When we have built our lives on the solid foundation, then we will stand to the Day of Judgment no matter what storms arise during our life on earth.

From all outward appearances it may be difficult to tell whether one has built on sand or solid rock. When you drive by a house, it is hard to tell what's its foundation is like. A house may look the same whether it is built on rock or sand. You cannot tell if it is a strong foundation or one that is cracked and crumbling. So also it is with you and me. We cannot always see from the outside what a person's foundation is like. It may take a good storm before we know. But God always knows. He knows us inside and out.

Furthermore, it is not important what our house looks like. The appearance of a house is not as important as its foundation. Many in this world have become caught up in the trap of their appearance in this world and have neglected their foundation for this life and for the life to come. Only a life that is built on the solid foundation of Christ and his Word will stand for time and for eternity.

When Jesus first spoke these words at the end of his Sermon on the Mount, the people were amazed. His words had the ring of truth and wisdom. They came with the authority of the Almighty God. What Jesus said was good common sense. His words were wisdom for people then as for people now. The wise thing to do was and is to build your life on the solid foundation of Christ and his Word.

When the Day of Judgment does come, it will not matter what kind of house we built in this world. What will matter is the kind of house we built here. This house is the house of our bodies and our lives. Have they been built on the solid foundation? If so, we can look forward to the blessings of God in this life and the blessings of God for all eternity. When our hearts and lives are built on the firm Word of our Lord then we will have a house that cannot be touched by wind, rain, or storm. On the Day of Judgment we will be able to stand before the Lord in full confidence and assurance that heaven is ours; for God will know that this life was built on a solid foundation. AMEN