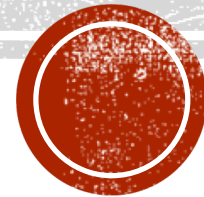


SHELTER IN THE TIME OF STORM
MATTHEW 7:24-29

Woodland Park Church of Christ

22 January 2023



“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock. ²⁶ “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: ²⁷ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.” ²⁸ And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, ²⁹ for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. **Matthew 7:24-29**



BACKDROP

- Book of Matthew is the focus of this year's Bible Bowl.
- Encourage our people to get behind this effort.
- Great way to study with children and to learn God's word together! We must do our part to implant God's word in their impressionable hearts – an evil, unforgiving world awaits.
- First book of the New Testament and one of four books giving an account of the life of Christ.
- One of two books recounting the birth of Christ (Luke).
- Written by Matthew (Levi), one of the 12 apostles and a former tax collector. **Matthew 9:9-13; 10:3**



BACKDROP CONT'D

- Jesus is concluding His famous Sermon on the Mount – perhaps the greatest theological exposition ever recorded.
- Began in chapter 5 with the “Beatitudes.”
Matthew 5:1-12
- Just prior, **Jesus had recruited Peter, Andrew, James, and John** and continued to teach in synagogues, preach the gospel of the kingdom, and heal the sick and diseased.
Matthew 4:18-25
- **Point → Great missions require collaboration and teamwork.**



Two are better than one,
because they have a good return for their labor:

¹⁰ If either of them falls down,
one can help the other up.

But pity anyone who falls
and has no one to help them up.

¹¹ Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm.
But how can one keep warm alone?

¹² Though one may be overpowered,
two can defend themselves.

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12



- In light of the chaos, confusion, and off-the-rails violence we are witnessing and observing, the Lord's message in today's lesson text should resonate and reverberate.
- We can withstand the storms of life (and oft times avoid many of the issues that plague our peers) if we just remember and heed the Lord's prophetic message.
- This message is especially critical for our young people -- **please remember your Creator.**
- Very appropriate for our initial message from the gospel according to Matthew to come from this text.



- A recently filed lawsuit really highlights the importance of periodic Bible study and application of biblical principles at an early age.
- ***Seattle Schools Sue Big Tech Over Youth Mental Health Crisis*** (6 January 2023)
 - Allegedly, schools can't fulfill their "educational mission while students are suffering from anxiety, depression, and other psychological troubles."
 - First of its kind ever brought by a school district.
 - Newsflash – Too much homework, too many examinations, and too difficult or complex assignments were not numbered among the culprits.
 - Claim is that companies like YouTube, Facebook, Snap, Inc. (SnapChat) and ByteDance Ltd. (TikTok) are "hooking young people on their platforms and creating a mental health crisis."
 - This lawsuit follows similar claims filed by some families that have blamed the tech companies for suicides by American youths.



We must be hyper-vigilant, exercise good judgment, remain ever watchful. We cannot fall asleep at the wheel.

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. **1 Peter 5:8 [NKJV]**

More than anything you guard, protect your mind, for life flows from it. **Proverbs 4:23 [CEB]**



Finally, brethren, whatever things are **true**,
whatever things *are* **noble**, whatever
things *are* **just**, whatever things *are* **pure**,
whatever things *are* **lovely**, whatever things *are* of
good report, if *there is* any virtue and if *there*
is anything praiseworthy—**meditate on these**
things. **Philippians 4:8 [NKJV]**

**Put another way, allow these things to
become objects of your desire!**



I. A SOLID FOUNDATION IS ESSENTIAL TO GODLY & SUCCESSFUL LIVING

The Lord is concerned about the foundation of our spiritual houses and our character.

On what and for what do we stand?

Like the houses in which we live, to withstand the storms and torrents, the foundation must be solid.

Yes, we often look at the aesthetics – the vaulted ceilings, marble/granite countertops, the spacious family rooms, the shiny and unique plumbing fixtures, the three-car garage, other amenities →
Better make sure the foundation is solid.

We care for our physical appearance and bodies – we primp it, try to sculpt it, and preserve it as best we can.



- The U.S. tops annual spending on beauty products at \$89.7B; China runs a distant second at \$58.3B;
- Footwear sales in the U.S. topped \$100B in 2021 for the first time in history;
- Americans spent over \$12B on clothing/apparel in 2022

Forbes (Magazine) → “The road to bankruptcy is paved with good deals!” See Proverbs 22:7

- Estimated that health and fitness club membership costs exceeded \$32B in 2022.

We should endeavor to look our best and keep ourselves in good physical shape. Take care of the one body God gave us and properly care for it. But that which remains once we remove the cosmetics, take off the fashionable digs, and strip away the physique is much more important.



For bodily exercise profits a little, but godliness is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is and of that which is to

come. ⁹ This *is* a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance. ¹⁰ For to this *end* we both labor and suffer reproach, because we trust in the living God, who is *the* Savior of all men, especially of those who believe.

I Timothy 4:8-10



II. HEARING MUST BE FOLLOWED UP WITH ACTION

“Therefore whoever *hears these sayings of Mine, and does them*, I will liken him to a wise man . . .”

Matthew 7:24

- Granted, hearing the Word gives us a chance because God has blessed us to have proper direction; however, it does us no good if we do not embrace and follow the teachings.
- Our situation, trajectory, plight will never improve if we are merely hearers.
- Does not matter how many well-delivered and relevant messages we hear, we must adhere.



But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. ²⁵ But ***he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.*** **James 1:22-25 [NKJV]**



With so many, however, it is not a lack of knowledge or understanding, but rather a failure to do what they know to do.

A wise brother once told me that perhaps the widest gulf known is the difference between what we know to do and what we do!

Thus says the LORD: “Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where the good way *is*, and walk in it; then you will find rest for your souls. but they said, ‘We will not walk *in it*.’” **Jeremiah 6:16**



III. NOTHING WORKS LIKE PERSISTENCE

- Persistence (determination) is a mainstay in the arsenal of those who overcome and triumph →

Blessed *are* those who **hunger and thirst** for righteousness, for they shall be filled. **Matthew 5:6**

- Sometimes we are simply not going to get it or get it right the first four or five times.
- Some things just do not come as easily or as naturally for some as they do for others. You may find yourself having to go back to the drawing board from time to time.



The key is to hang in there and not lose your passion, zeal or love for the Lord or Godly pursuits.

Those who have ascended to any noteworthy station in life (irrespective of vocation) will tell you it is/was a GRIND -- filled with ups and downs, ebbs and flows, and hills and valleys.

Ask and keep on asking and it will be given to you; ***seek and keep on seeking*** and you will find; ***knock and keep on knocking*** and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who keeps on asking receives, and he who keeps on seeking finds, and to him who keeps on knocking, it will be opened.

Matthew 7:7-8 [AMP]



Nothing provides safety and security like having our souls anchored and our character moored in the teachings of our Lord and in biblical precepts.

It is certain that we will suffer adversity, be tempted beyond what we sometimes feel we can endure, and face circumstances that bring us to our knees.

Just remember and adhere to the Lord's final note in His Sermon on the Mount →

“Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: ²⁵ and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.” **Matthew 7:24-25**



LORD'S INVITATION EXTENDED TO ALL

- **Hear** the gospel (**Acts 15:7; I Cor. 15:1-4**);
- **Believe** the gospel (**Acts 8:37, 15:7**);
- **Repent** of sins (**Acts 2:38**);
- **Confess** Christ (**Acts 8:37**);
- **Be baptized** for the remission of sin (**Acts 2:38**);

or



LORD'S INVITATION (CONT'D)

- Be reconciled unto the Lord **(I John 1:8-9)**; or
- Desire prayer. **(James 5:16)**.

