

LIVING WATER

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WHERE ARE YOU BUILDING?

by Brett Hogland

A common goal of new married couples is to build their dream home someday. However, not everyone has the ability or opportunity to accomplish this dream. Some will buy an existing home and others will rent their home. Not everyone will experience building their own home or physical abode, but every human being will, in fact, "build" their own house in a spiritual sense.

In the closing words of His masterpiece sermon on the mount, Jesus revealed that everyone builds their house.

***"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: 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. 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: and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall."* (Matt.7:24-27)**

All people will build. The only question is simply, WHERE?

As we read these words, we have to take into account that Jesus is "preaching the gospel of the kingdom" (4:23) and finishing a powerful sermon that reveals a radically different character required in the kingdom

citizens (5:3-12); A radically different perspective on the design, intent and goal of God's instruction in the Law of Moses; A clear condemnation of religion merely to be seen by men - an outward religious form without love for God, neighbor or even enemy; A clear identification of the true, lasting treasure and the panacea of worry over temporal things; A proper perspective of ourselves, of God and of false prophets; And in the final admonition, He warns of calling Him Lord, but not obeying (7:21-23). What then, will the hearers of this great sermon do with the gospel that they just heard? Jesus forms the final words of His sermon into a simple parable that is directed toward this very consideration. Jesus squarely confronts them with only two options - hear this instruction and obey it or hear this instruction and do not obey it. I think that we all routinely experience this deliberation or consideration of what to do with the instruction that we have just heard after a sermon or bible study, but I'm not sure that we realize the significant consequence of our choice. Jesus is saying that every time we hear the truth, we are actively building our house by our obedience, rejection or even procrastination. This realization is vital to our ultimate success in attaining the eternal crown. Our response must be far more than simply saying "good sermon," or "that was a great bible study." Our response must be a transformation and imitation of the divine instruction that we have received.

It is important to note that "the wise man" is not "the man who hears these words" and understands them. For too many people, the great desire is hear

instruction and understand difficult truths that they can instruct others. But there is no desire to genuinely break themselves down and transform into a reflection of the truth that they have discovered. Again, this is NOT the wise man.

The wise man is not even “the man who hears these words” and believes them. The final issue that Jesus addresses was not on understanding or believing. This indicates that many of the hearers understood to some degree and even believed. The question on which everything hinged was whether or not they would obey.

This strikes right at the heart of the idea that salvation by grace through faith means that there is nothing that we must do or even can do in order to be saved. Jesus said that the whole determination of our house standing or falling, turns on doing or not doing something! Jesus’ words here are not dealing with the basis of our salvation, which is the love, mercy, and grace of God. But rather with the nature of the faith that responds to His love, mercy, and grace. Faith coupled with obedience is living and life-giving, but faith without obedience is dead (Jas.2:24). Building on the Rock is accomplished by hearing the truth,

believing it, and obeying it (Rom.10:13-16).

Our Rock is Christ. He gives gravity, substance and solid foundation to an earthly life that is filled with storms and trials. Many people want the security and stability of the Rock, but they are not willing to genuinely build their house on that rock by surrendering their will and being transformed through obedience to the faith. He is our precious cornerstone, a sure foundation (Isa.28:16).

Be sure that you are building your house every time that you hear the truth. Where are you building? There are only two choices, and it is a choice between eternal life or eternal ruin. Hear the words of Jesus and DO them!

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