

### Introduction:

I have a confession. Sometimes preaching is discouraging. The fact is the stuff I teach is hard. It takes commitment and discipline. Most of the time it is unnatural. It just isn't the way most of us are wired. So, sometimes preaching feels like an uphill battle. All this stuff about victory and building our lives on the Rock can sometimes seem overwhelming. Who really wants to do any of this? Sometimes I just wish this job were easier. So I thought today, I'd take a different approach. I want to give an easy message. Let's look at **Matthew 7:24-27**. Most of the time, we look at this passage and focus on the difficult lessons of building on the rock. Today, I'd rather take the path of least resistance and talk about how to build our lives on sand.

### Discussion:

#### I. Read God's Word.

- A. I think it is interesting that Jesus doesn't say the guy who builds on sand never hears His words. Rather, in **Matthew 7:26**, He talked about those who did hear His words. Of course, if you don't even hear the words of Jesus, your life is going to be built on sand. But an even better way to do this is to listen to Jesus.
- B. Go to church. Listen to sermons. Participate in Bible classes. Why not go all out and even have a Bible reading plan. The more you read per day the better. It is so easy. You can even get it on audio and listen to the Bible in the car. There are Bible apps for your smartphones, your tablets, and your computers.
- C. Here's what makes this step so important. If you "go to church" and read your Bible, you can more easily deceive yourself into believing you must be building on the rock. Not to mention, you are laying the foundation for a readymade gripe session against God when things don't go well for you. I mean, you've gone to church. You listened to sermons (sometimes for even an entire hour). You read the Bible. Shouldn't all that count for something? Shouldn't God protect you from storms for all of that?
- D. I know it sounds counterintuitive, but if you want to build your life on sand, start by reading God's Word.

#### II. Ignore it.

- A. This step is key. It is the signal difference between those who build on the rock and those who build on the sand. **Matthew 7:26** says that if you want to build on sand all you have to do is take all that Word of God that you've heard and ignore it. Don't do it. I mean, why would you want to? It's hard work. Sometimes it is boring. Not to mention it is often hard to see how what God's Word says will actually get you what you want.
- B. Let me give you some practical examples of how to make this work.
  1. God's Word says to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness (cf. **Matthew 6:33**). But why do that? There are so many other things that seem more important. Obviously, what we need to do is make sure our financial house is established first. Make sure your secular education is set, your college education is established, your career future is made certain. Of course, that takes a lot of work, so then you need to make sure that all of your recreation and entertainment is provided next. Obviously you need time to unwind. Let's just ignore that part of God's Word.
  2. God's Word says to forgive those who ask for forgiveness (cf. **Luke 17:3-4**). But why do that? If you forgive them, you might have to be friends with them still. If you forgive them, you no longer have the momentary pleasure of nursing your grudges. You are no longer able to feel spiritually superior by holding their sins against them. Obviously, holding their sins over their heads allows you have to have a sense of power over them. Let's just ignore that part of God's Word.
  3. God's Word says if someone sins against you, you should go talk to them about it alone (cf. **Matthew 18:15**). But why do that? That's absolutely no fun at all. I mean if you do that you don't get to feel the joy of sharing a juicy tidbit of gossip with someone else. And there is no way for you to prove to others that you are better by showing how awful someone else is. Not to mention, if you go talk to them alone and they repent, you have to forgive them and they'll get away with it. It feels so much better to punish them for what they did than talk to them. Let's just ignore that part of God's Word.

#### III. Justify how you are living.

- A. I know this isn't specifically mentioned in **Matthew 7:24-27**, but I know it had to happen. I mean these two different builders see each other building these houses. As the one does the hard work of building on the

rock, the sand builder automatically feels the need to justify the choices he is making. Why isn't he doing what this other builder is doing?

- B. There are all kinds of great justifications. Let me share a few with you.
  1. Nobody else is doing what that rock builder is doing.
  2. Everybody else is building like I am.
  3. Surely God doesn't really expect that from me.
  4. That's just not natural. Normal people don't behave like that.
  5. I think God just wants me to be happy.
  6. I can see living like that in some circumstances, but my situation is different.
  7. That's just too hard.
  8. People will think I'm weird.
  9. If I act like that, people will take advantage of me.
  10. I like the Bible and all, but let's not be extreme with it.
- C. You know, the justification doesn't even have to be all that good, just as long as it salves your conscience for ignoring some part of God's Word.

#### IV. Blame God when things go wrong.

- A. Again, I know this particular step is not blatantly stated in **Matthew 7:24-26**, but who controls the weather? I mean Jesus was able to stop the storms wasn't He? And when God talked to Job, He admitted He controls the storehouses of snow and hail. He is the father of the rain and cleft the channel for the torrents of rain and the way of the thunderbolt (**Job 38:22-30**). My building was doing just fine until the storms came. Why didn't God keep the storms from happening?
- B. Consider the kinds of storms that come: getting fired, illness, death of a loved one (especially a spouse or child), betrayal by a friend or family member (especially a spouse), unemployment, relationship trouble, stock market crash, acts of nature that destroy homes or property, and on the list can go.
- C. This is important. Don't miss this step. If you decide that the problem is you didn't prepare for storms that just naturally happen in life by building on the rock, you might change the way you build. As long as you keep blaming God for allowing the storms, you will be able to successfully keep building on the sand.

#### V. Watch your life crumble.

- A. In **Matthew 7:27**, the sand builder's house falls. The storms have eaten away at the sandy foundation. For a time, both houses looked stable. For a time, both seemed livable. In fact, for a time, the sandy foundation seemed better. It was easier, more natural, and seemed to be working just as well. But as the repeated rains came, the water started to eat away at the sand. Of course, at first, that didn't even seem so bad. A little extra work and you could get the sand back in place. In fact, you could sandbag the foundation and get a little extra protection. But then another storm and another. Then a major storm hit. The foundation washed away and the house fell.
- B. Here's the problem. When do you most need a good house? Smack in the middle of a storm. Here's the thing. The sandy foundation doesn't cause you problems when life is sunny. It causes you problems right when you most need a house. The sandy foundation will fail right when you most need a foundation. And that causes a problem. If life is sunny, hearing about a sandy foundation doesn't faze us. It seems like it must apply to someone else. But, I assure you, eventually this is the final step of building on sand.

#### Conclusion:

I have to tell you. I feel a lot better now. That was so easy. The path of least resistance is just so much easier to travel down and preach about. Of course, some of you are saying you don't want to see your life crumble. Well, if that's the case then all I can say is you might as well not only come to church and read God's Word but actually do what He says no matter how difficult in the moment or even how counterintuitive or unnatural it seems. And if your sandy foundation has been washed out and your life is crumbling. Here is the great thing about our rock. It is not too late. You can start building on Him and He will bring you through. Yes, it will be stormy. It will be painful. But in the end, you'll be held up by His strength. I know building on the rock is not always easy, but it is simple. Read His Word and do what He says no matter what.