

Matthew 7:21-29

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[0:00] Remember that Jesus is not speaking in chapter 7 to the ear religious.! He is speaking to those who think that they are part of the kingdom of heaven, but are not citizens thereof.

He is warning those in my hearing today to not be deceived by others and in today's text to not deceive themselves.

He is warning us to escape final judgment. By placing saving faith in his person and in his work. He is exhorting us to find our righteousness in him and in him alone.

The one and the only one who can grant us perfect righteousness. He has said in Matthew chapter 5 and verse 20, For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, those perceived to be the most righteous, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

And then later in chapter 5, verse 48, he says, You therefore must be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.

[1:15] So how are we to have this exceeding righteousness? How are we to be perfect? Jesus does not leave us without the answer to those most pressing of questions.

So join me this morning as we look at our text as he continues to unfold that answer. Matthew chapter 7, verse 21 through 29.

Beloved, this is God's word to us. It was written for his glory and our good. And so we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and to obey its commands.

Jesus says, Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

And the rain fell and the floods came and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall because it had been founded on the rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

[2:53] And the rain fell and the rain fell and the winds blew and beat against that house and it fell and great was the fall of it. And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching for he was teaching them as one who had authority and not as their scribes.

I want to begin our study today by considering the builders of verses 24 through 27. As Jesus is employing them as an analogy for what he has been teaching from verse 13 and down through verse 23.

Let's begin by looking at their similarities. How are these two builders the same? And then we will better be able to look at their differences together.

So first their similarities. Jesus says in both verse 24 and in verse 26, everyone who hears these words of mine.

So both builders hear these words. Jesus is certainly referring to the words that he has just spoken.

[4:08] Those words that we have been studying for the past so many months. But I also believe that we should understand this more broadly. Jesus is speaking of the whole of the word of God.

This full, declarative, redemptive work that God has given to us in the scripture. Jesus said in Matthew chapter 5, verse 17 through 19.

Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets. This was a common way to speak of the Jewish Bible, our Old Testament.

He says, I have not come to abolish them, but to fulfill them. And then he goes on to say in verse 19. Therefore, whoever relaxes on one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same.

Will be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does them and teaches them will be called great. In the kingdom of heaven. So Jesus is not the abolisher, but the fulfiller of words that should be taught and obeyed.

[5:13] Before Jesus is crucified, he promises that he will send the Holy Spirit to teach you all things. And bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

That's John chapter 14, verse 26. And then upon his resurrection, he commands his disciples to make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.

Matthew 28 and verse 20. We believe that we have that teaching in our New Testament. So we have the Old Testament commended to us to be taught and obeyed.

And we have the New Testament commended to us to be taught and obeyed. The Apostle Paul states in Romans chapter 10 and verse 17. So faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ.

So we are to be hearers and doers of the word of Christ. Both of the Sermon on the Mount and the broader context as well.

[6:20] Both men, both builders in today's text are hearers of the word of Christ. They are also both men who build houses.

These are figurative houses, not literal houses. We see that also in verse 24 and in verse 26. We should understand these houses to be lives, specifically religious lives.

These are houses built in response to hearing the words of Christ. Both houses are built to stand. We get no inclination in the text at all that one house was built to stand and one house was built by design to not stand. Both houses are built to stand.

Both builders have confidence that their houses will stand. But one man's confidence is in the Lord and the other man's confidence is in himself.

[7:24] So both men hear the words of Christ. Both men build houses based on the words of Christ.

And Jesus' exclusion of other details should lead us to understand that both houses are built in the same location. They certainly both experience the same storm with the same materials.

We have no reason to think that the circumstances of these men's lives are any different. That is to say, right? They're just examples of two ways.

Narrow, difficult path and broad, easy way. We're meant to understand that the great difference between these two men is what happens when the storm comes.

John wrote of his vision in Revelation chapter 20, verse 12 and verse 15 of the final judgment.

[8:30] This is the storm here that Jesus is referring to. I have heard verses 24 through 27 preached way too many times about standing against the storms of life.

That is not what this text is about. The scripture has much to say about such things. Many wonderful places we can go to find peace and comfort and tools to pick up to stand the storms of life.

That is not what this text is about. This is about final judgment. This is about previously in our text. Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my father on that day.

This is an eschatological text. This is referring to that final day of judgment. What religious house will stand and what religious house will be demolished?

That's the weight of the text that's before us. Today. So Revelation chapter 20, verse 12 and then verse 15. John wrote of his vision.

[9:38] This is the judgment that Jesus is talking about in our text. This is the judgment that Jesus is talking about in our text today.

And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life. He was thrown into the lake of fire.

This is the judgment that Jesus is talking about in our text today.

And so this is a storm that we will all experience. Will your house stand on that great day of judgment?

And to help you think about in our text today. And to help you think about that this morning, we should consider the differences between these two builders. First, one builder is declared wise in verse 24.

He has wisdom. And the other declared foolish in verse 26. On the criteria that the wise man hears these words of mine, these words of Christ, and does them.

[10:52] And the foolish man hears these words of mine, and does not do them. So Jesus declares wise the hearer and doer of his word.

And foolish the mere hearer of his word. James borrows language from Jesus in James chapter 1 verses 22 and following.

Where he wrote, But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror.

For he looks at himself and goes away at once, forgets what he looks like. But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets, but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

You see, beloved, what we do proceeds from who we are. James is saying that if you are one who perseveres to the end and stands in the judgment, you are a disciple of Jesus Christ and a disciple of Jesus Christ hears the words of Christ and does them.

[12:17] Peter wrote in 2 Peter chapter 1 verse 5 and following. Make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue and virtue with knowledge and knowledge with self-control and self-control with steadfastness and steadfastness with godliness.

And godliness with brotherly affection and brotherly affection with love. For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins. And then verse 10.

Therefore, brothers, be all the more diligent to confirm your calling and election. For if you practice these qualities, you will never fall. If you find yourself doubting your salvation or find a brother or sister doubting their salvation, do not say to them, tell me about the day you walked the aisle.

Open the front of your Bible and look at the date that you wrote down when you made a profession of faith in Christ. The scripture doesn't do this and neither should we.

[13:34] We should say, hey, turn with me to 2 Peter chapter 1 verses 5 through 10. And let's consider your life. Let's stop and think. Are these qualities yours and increasing or are they not?

Other texts do this well for us also. The whole book of 1 John serves us in this way. Peter in 2 Peter chapter 1 is in essence saying that you show yourself to be one who perseveres, one who is called and elect by doing the word of Christ.

Now, I am not, nor will I ever suggest that we are saved by our works. That is not what James or Peter are suggesting.

And neither is our Lord in his Sermon on the Mount. But it is not just the doer of the word of Christ, but the doer of the word of Christ who is in Christ who is saved.

We throw ourselves on his righteousness. Our status is changed. This is the great doctrine of regeneration. We become new creations. And out of our new selves, we act.

[14:50] How do we know if we have a new self? We measure how it is that we act. Am I a doer of the word of Christ, taking full confidence not in my doing, but in his work on my behalf?

Take a look up the text a bit. Matthew chapter 7 at verse 22. On that day, many will say to me, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name and cast out demons in your name and do many mighty works in your name?

Jesus does not condemn these particular declarations of good works. It's difficult for us to know by what power these men did these things.

There are some clear examples in the Scripture of people doing works that appeared to be works of God but were done by the hand of Satan in their lives. I think this still exists in our day.

People do miraculous things. They do it in the name of God, but they're really doing it under a different power altogether. There are many who, under their own power, just do outwardly good-looking things.

[16:04] We don't know exactly what's going on here, but Jesus does not say, those are not the good works that I required of you. He doesn't condemn those particular good works.

So we can gather that the works mentioned are in fact works of obedience. What does Jesus tell us He will say in that future day in verse 23?

What will be the condition of their acceptance into His kingdom? The works? He says, And then I will declare to them, I never knew you.

Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. So they did works, but they didn't do works in Christ. They weren't in Him.

He never knew them. The foolish man builds a house that he believes will stand in the last day, but it will not because the foolish man is not known by Jesus Christ.

[17:03] This is the man who built his house on the sand, the shifting sand of his works. We must be so very careful at this point.

Jesus is teaching that it is altogether possible to appear to be following Christ with our actions. You can have every confidence that you are in Christ because of your works, but this can be a self-confidence, a self-righteousness.

You can also declare all of the right theology and not be in Christ. Verse 21, Jesus says, Not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord, will enter the kingdom of heaven.

This is a statement of careful theological accuracy. It was common in Jesus' day to call someone Lord as a matter of respect or of honor.

Your boss may have been called Lord. The governor may have been called Lord. Military generals would have been called Lord. But to call Jesus Lord, Lord suggests much more than mere human respect.

[18:14] It suggests that it is altogether possible to mentally ascend to the divinity of Jesus Christ and to not place saving faith in Him.

More broadly, it means that we can have this book so figured out, just like the Pharisees who searched it diligently but failed to come to Christ.

This book is a precious book. If you've been here long at all, you know how much I love the Scripture. But this is a book that points us to our Creator.

We know God and we know Christ through this book. And we can so fail to know the book and not know the author of it.

There's a difference between knowing God and really knowing about Him. As a church who is in a tradition that loves study and we should, cares deeply about theology as we should, wants to make sure things are just so-so as we should, we have to be very careful that we don't think that knowing things makes us righteous before God.

[19:27] It's knowing Christ and being known by Him that approves us before God. In Matthew chapter 13, verse 24 through 30, Jesus tells the parable of the wheat and the tares, which should be absolutely jarring to us.

And I want you to turn there with me. Matthew chapter 13, just a few pages. This parable, I think, stands beside the parable of the soils.

So the parable of the soils, we see there's four different soils and we're sowing, the word is being sown and it gets accepted in various ways, ways that we can observe now. But this is the one that stands eschatologically next to it.

Well, what about the end? That's what Jesus says. The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while his men were sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat and went away.

So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared also. And the servants of the master of the house came and said to him, Master, did you not sow good seed in your field?

[20:47] How then does it have weeds? He said to them, An enemy has done this. So the servant said to him, Then do you want us to go and gather them? But he said, No, less than gathering the weeds, you root up the

wheat along with them.

Let both grow together until the harvest. And at harvest time, I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn.

There was a common weed of the day called a tare. And it looked exactly like wheat until it was time for the wheat to bear fruit.

Until it went to grain. And the tares did not go to grain in the same way. And so it is very possible what Jesus is saying is that we can look around and we can all look the same.

Good seed sowed in good soil. And yet amongst us, There are people who are confident in what they know and in what they do who are not in Christ.

[21:49] Will not bear the fruit of righteousness. Isn't that jarring? It is to me. And it should cause us to put our hands to the labor of discipleship.

Helping each other follow Christ. Helping each other be confident of our calling and election.

Growing up in righteousness. Right?

Lest at the end we be shown to be a tare. A weed that is gathered and thrown into the fire. We can be theologically astute and zealous for good works and have Jesus declare to us on the final day of judgment, I never knew you.

Depart from me, you workers of lawlessness. Unless the foundation of our lives is built on the rock. What is this rock?

It's Jesus Himself. His person and His completed work. Just as Peter declares that, just after, excuse me, Jesus declares that Jesus is the Christ.

[22:57] In Matthew 16, verse 18, Jesus says, And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Right? I want to think, although it probably didn't happen for them at this time, but I want to think that the disciples' brains just exploded because they connected back to the Sermon on the Mount. The rock!

And they went, listen to Him, His metaphors are consistent, it's fantastic. Jesus is the rock on which our lives must be built if we're to stand in final judgment.

In Matthew chapter 7, Jesus is the narrow gate that must be found and entered, and He is the rock on which our houses must be built if we are to stand. The surface of the land of Jesus' home was largely, and still is, sand, and the substrate, the underlayer, of the land of Jesus' home, still is, was largely sand.

So in order to build a solid home, builders of His day would have to dig down through the sand to find the bedrock. They would have to go and search for it and do this work of clearing out the shifting land to find the solid land on which to build.

[24:22] It is with this reality in mind that Jesus says the wise man built his house on the rock. They understand this analogy.

If you've built a house or you're building a house, we know that we have to build our foundations below the frost line. Otherwise, our foundations will crack. If you haven't, you have no idea what I'm talking about.

In Georgia, it's not very deep. Our foundations don't go very deep in Georgia because the frost doesn't go very deep in Georgia. In other places, boy, do you have to dig a foundation to make sure your house's foundation doesn't crack.

So it's into this context that Jesus is speaking. They all know exactly what he's talking about. How a house on the rock is stable and a house on the sand is not.

Jesus is the rock. We cannot build religious lives with any measure of self-confidence, any measure of self-confidence, but rather with confidence in Jesus.

[25:22] It is with a confidence in his completed work that we work and evidence our confidence. It's because of who he makes us that we work.

Spurgeon once said, faith and works are bound up in the same bundle. He that obeys God trusts God and he that trusts God obeys God. He that is without faith is without works and he that is without works is without faith.

And Jesus says in John chapter 14 verse 15, if you love me, you will keep my commandments. So there is a wise builder and a foolish builder.

Both experienced the same storm in the final judgment. And how did they fare in that storm? The wise man's house did not fall because it had been founded on the rock.

Verse 25. The foolish man's house fell and great was the fall of it. We are builders, all of us. Will your house stand in the judgment or will it experience a great fall?

[26:33] Not many preachers these days like to speak of judgment. It's a most unpleasant thing, isn't it, to talk about the eternal state of souls who aren't found in Jesus Christ.

I suggest that that's happening so prevalently in our day because they are far too concerned with pleasing their listeners and want people to come and feel good about coming to church.

And as Thomas Watson, a Puritan preacher, said, this is on your bulletin, guilty men do not love to hear of the day of judgment. Which would be to suggest that those who are found in Christ do.

That final day where we will be given to the kingdom of God in our entirety. But I have to tell you, church, my concern this morning is not that you be pleased with me.

I don't really care if it means that your soul is headed towards destruction. If your soul be not saved, why does it matter if you like me?

[27:45] I want you instead this morning to have an unshakable confidence that your house is built upon the rock because that final storm is coming.

The scripture promises it to us. The writer of Hebrews says in Hebrews 9 and verse 27, it is appointed for man to die once and after that comes judgment.

This is a sure thing. If you are not found in Christ on that day of judgment, it is a very frightful thing. You ought to tremble at the idea that there will be a final judgment for you and that you could be separated from God forever.

Jesus said in Luke 13 verse 28 that the place those cast from the Lord's presence will be full of weeping and the gnashing of teeth.

It is a lake of fire, a place of torment for those who are enemies of our most holy God. Flee from the wrath of God to God in Christ.

[28:57] Place your faith in Jesus. the same way, I think that Ray Comfort uses this analogy a lot, the same way that a parachuter, a parachutist, I think is the right term, trusts in a parachute.

The other day I flew a pretend plane in our living room and had my boys putting on backpacks and jumping off the couch to talk about what it means to believe in Jesus. To trust that He will catch you at the end.

That you will be found in Him and His righteousness will be yours. And the penalty for your sin was paid by Him on the cross to believe in that way that you would toss yourself out of the plane.

Flee from the wrath of God to God in Christ. Enter by the narrow gate. Do not be deceived by others or deceive yourselves.

It is confident faith in the person and work of Christ. evidenced by obedience that will see us through the judgment of God and into His blessed presence forever.

[30:07] Matthew concludes his record of Jesus' sermon by writing, And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at His teaching, for He is teaching them as one who had authority and not as their scribes.

They were amazed. They were dumbfounded. This was a big teaching that they had heard. No one had spoken such strong declarations about the kingdom of God as Jesus had.

No one had corrected the common misunderstandings of the law as Jesus had. No one had placed such high standards of righteousness and then declared themselves the righteous answer as Jesus had.

No one had so warned against false prophets and false believers as Jesus had. Jesus' listeners were amazed at the authority that He spoke with.

But Jesus' listeners in His day and in ours need more than amazement. We need belief.

[31:18] There were many in Jesus' hearing in His day, and there have been many since that have read and have studied and have poured over the Sermon on the Mount and are amazed by its teaching.

There are many in our day that pick it up as a good moralistic guide for life. We shouldn't just be amazed at His words. We need to believe in His words and do them.

We need to be like the Peter of John chapter 6 after Jesus had said many difficult things. He said all kinds of stuff about eating His flesh and drinking His blood and people are getting a little bit weirded out by Jesus.

Many abandoned. The disciples left in droves. And Jesus says, what the text says, verse 66, after this many of the disciples turned back and no longer walked with Him.

So Jesus said to the twelve, do you want to go away as well? Simon Peter answered Him, Lord, this is who we want to be.

[32:25] This is who we want to be. The Peter of John chapter 6, Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life and we have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy One of God.

May we be those who declare Jesus as the Holy One of God, the Christ, the narrow gate and the rock. And may we enter by Him and build our houses on Him into the eternal rest of God.

Let's pray together.