

Text – Matthew 7:14-27

²⁴ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ 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.

²⁶ 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. ²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

Pray

Main Point – A Life of Obedience is a Life of Confidence

Introduction (200)

Hook

How many of you enjoy doing something dangerous?

Some of us get a thrill out of doing something with risk: Climbing trees, using a gun, or mountain biking.

But some of us don't enjoy it but do dangerous things simply because we have to: Driving a car, crossing the road, working or living in a rough neighbourhood.

For all of these things, from tree climbing to driving, there are certain rules which keep us safe. That is why training and lessons are so important. When we know and keep these rules, they become second nature, and

this activity which used to be high risk is now relatively safe.

Obedying the rules gives you confidence that you and others will be safe.

Life is a high-risk activity we are all taking part in. False teaching and deception are some of the dangers we face. But we have been given rules to live, commands given to us by our saviour. To know and keep these will keep us safe and confident that we are indeed on the path to heaven and not to Hell.

In today's study Jesus teaches us on this topic. We will find that **A life of obedience is a life of confidence**

That is the main point and title of our study: A life of obedience is a life of confidence.

Outline

To help us work through the passage we will divide our study into three parts.

First we will see:

Two Responses

Two Houses

Two Results

Part 1 – Two Responses (800)

Exposition

Context

So let us begin by looking at the Two Responses.

Jesus is wrapping up his sermon on the mount. To conclude his teaching he gives his listeners an invitation, or a plea to turn from false religion to the Kingdom of God. We see this plea in verse 13.

He calls people to enter the narrow gate, which leads to life. But he also warns that only few find it.

And why do so few enter the narrow way? This way which leads to life?

Firstly, because false teachers are prowling around everywhere. They will do everything to turn people from following the Jesus. And Jesus has some very strong words to false teachers in verses 15-20

Warning against Self-Deception

But there is another reason so few enter the way which leads to life. And that is self-deception. Those who are deceiving themselves.

Those who think they are saved but they are not.

In verse 21-23 Jesus points out those who **say** but do not do. While in verses 24-27, our passage, Jesus points out those who **hear** but do not do.

Jesus is warning against the ultimate deception of Satan – To think you are saved when in reality you are not.

The Key is obedience

And the key, Jesus points out is obedience. That is the difference Jesus wants to highlight between a true follower of Jesus and someone who is self-deceived.

Notice that in verse 24 and 26

*²⁴ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and **does them** will be like a wise man*

And then the mirroring thought in verse 26

*²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and **does not do** them will be like a foolish man*

The mark of a convert are those who, hear, believe and do.

Please turn with me to 1 John 2:3-6. Where we also see this fundamental principle elaborated on. Those who belong to Jesus obey Jesus.

³ And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments. ⁴ Whoever says “I know him” but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him, ⁵ but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: ⁶ whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.

Yes, we are saved by faith alone, but saving faith is never alone. Jesus is not talking about how we are saved here. He is distinguishing the true convert from the false. A true Christian obeys his word. A false Christian does not obey.

Warning and an encouragement

Now when we read this parable, we must not think that this is just a warning to false converts, but it is just as much an encouragement to those who are obeying the commands of Jesus.

Jesus is teaching us here that those who hear his word and does it are truly his. Yes, the gate is narrow and

the way is hard, but it is possible to know we are on that way.

So for those of us who are resting in Christ and seeking to obey him, this passage should be heard as a comfort, an encouragement and an inspiration to continue to follow and obey Jesus.

Application

Do you hear warning or encouragement?

So what do you hear when you hear this passage? Do you hear a warning or an encouragement? What was your first reaction when the passage was read. Did you feel defensive or a sense of peace?

Just ponder that. Self-deception can be the hardest thing to identify. But let the spirit through the word speak to you. Satan wants you to be deceived.

But if you are a follower of Jesus, a passage like this will fill you of confidence and spur you on. And we can praise God for that. He wants us to have confidence in our salvation.

Obedience is the only proof we have of being under the Lordship of Jesus

Because obedience is really the only proof we have of being under the lordship of Jesus. Obedience is the fruit of a changed heart.

As true Christians we can rejoice in this truth. Jesus has saved us and out of recognition to him, we serve and obey him. And these acts of service and obedience help our feeble hearts and our forgetful minds to know, deep down in our hearts, that we are his.

Since we belong to him we serve him, and since we serve him we know we are his.

And to opposite is true too. If you do not serve Him, whom are you serving? If you do not trust him as your saviour, you will have no desire to serve Him. Instead, you will serve yourself. You may conform to some social norm, or moral norm or even religious norm because of the expectations around you, but you are not serving Him. You are deceiving yourself.

Admiring Teaching of Jesus is really worthless. Must be a guide for life

One who is deceived will simply admire the teaching of Jesus for their own sake. Like a student of social behaviour intrigued by this unique philosophy.

They read the bible and learn of Loving your enemies, morality of thoughts, giving to the needy, praying, not being anxious and so forth. They think that these are great principles, worthy of study and understanding. But to hear and understand these principles have no value if they do not form the guide to their life.

Knowing bible stories, memorizing scripture, articulating theology does not mean you are a follower of Jesus and saved from Hell.

Jesus is stressing the point: If you hear but **do not do** the words of Jesus, you are a fool who's life will be destroyed. To hear is not enough. Living it out is what matters. It is a matter of life and death.

As you keep pondering this, let us take a closer look at the parable to see how Jesus drives this point home. Which brings us to our second section.

Part 2 – Two Houses

Exposition + Application (800)

Houses not different from the outside (200)

In this parable we see two builders, one wise and one foolish, each building a house.

There are a couple of similarities which are worth thinking about here.

First, it is implied that these houses look the same from the outside. One is not a shack and the other a palace. Both build a house.

The second thing is that these houses are built in roughly the same location. We know this because the same storm and the same flooded waters puts the houses to the test.

So, the houses look the same from the outside and they are built in the same place.

Similarities of True and False Christian

What are we to learn from this? The life of a true Christian and a false Christian can look the same to onlookers, and a true Christian and a false Christian can be found in the same place.

They can look the same:

- Both seen as religious people.
- Both seen to have good theology,
- Both seen to have morality
- Both seen to serve in the church
- Both seen to be generous,
- Both seen to be good citizen

And they can also be found in the same location: Same town, same church, same preaching, same circle of friends.

So we cannot be deceived by appearance or by association.

Just the fact that so-and-so comes to this church and speaks the right words does not make them a true Christian.

Jesus is saying the differences between a True and False Christian can be unseen from the outside.

Differences

But if you have a closer look the difference will become very clear. Their foundations are different. That is the critical difference Jesus illustrates for us. One is founded on the rock the other is founded on the sand.

A lot can be learned from the choices of the wise and foolish builder.

Fast Quick Easy and Cheap (200)

What is the appeal for building your house on the sand? Even a fool does not set out with the intention of failure. He is drawn to it because it is easy, quick and cheap. Sand is easy to dig. So the foundations can be finished quickly and house can go up in no time. No need to worry about all those extra costs of digging deeper and digging into hard rock.

But building foundations into rock is hard, tedious and expensive.

For us today

And similarly, having Jesus and his word as the foundation of our life is not quick and easy. There is

no room for superficial conversion, just saying a token prayer as if you were ordering a plane ticket to heaven. To obey Jesus is to be prepared to repent, to turn from your sin, to deny you – self and to mourn over your sin. There is nothing easy or cheap about this.

But in contrast, the false Christian does not want to let go of the things he wants to do. The things that she desires. That is too hard and the cost is too much.

Beside, all of these selfish desires can all get covered up by a façade of Christian behaviour. Saying the right things and doing the right things to be accepted.

Do not be deceived. The false Christian is more concerned by appearance and the approval of men than obeying Jesus and turning from sin.

No regard for instruction (200)

Choosing to build on sand also shows the arrogance of the foolish man.

He wants to build **his** way, with his plans and with no regard to what others have done before or others are doing. The silly building code always asks too much. Those other builders all over designed and over engineered everything. He is convinced that they all wasted their money and efforts.

The wise man on the other hand is humble. There are certain rules that must be followed. Considerations that must be taken. Calculations must be done. A wise man will heed the advice to dig down to the bedrock and make his foundations there.

For us today

A true Christian will take time to search God's word for how to live his life.

A true Christian will seeking counsel on how to live his life.

A true Christian will take the time to dig deep into the scripture. And they will build their life on those truth. Not on their whims, likes and dislikes. Not on sentiment

A true Christian wants a depth of relationship with Jesus which lasts a life time rather than a fleeting spiritual "experience".

A true Christian will also look to Christians in the past. To those mature saints who are ahead of us in the race. Some we can talk to, and some we can read their thoughts. Some live in this day others in centuries past. A true Christian is humble and heeds the advice of those who have gone before.

No regard for the future (200)

The last thing we will identify about this foolish builder is that he has no regard to the future.

There he is, building his house next to a river and he thinks that the river will stay the same all year round and, and in the years to come. "There is no danger there" he thinks. Despite the obvious fact that all rivers flood. And some flood really bad. But He does not want to think that. Why be so negative. Why ponder on something so unpleasant?

For us today

And that is often the way with a false Christian. They deceive themselves that this life will continue forever. Nothing will change. Why ponder on something so unpleasant as death and God's judgement? This façade of a Christian life keeps them thinking they are fine, so they do not feel the need to obey Jesus.

But a true Christian knows how frail their life is. A true Christian knows they must prepare for the future of facing God.

The storm is coming, we are either prepared, or think we are prepared.

Which brings us to the final section of our study: Two results

Part 3 – Two Results (800)

Exposition + Application

We All die – God's judgement will come

Jesus paints for us a picture of a great storm. Torrential rain, strong winds and major flooding. This hits the two houses and puts them to the test.

This can be a picture of the troubles of this life, but also referring to the ultimate test when we die and face God's judgement.

Everybody will face this test. We all die and we will come face to face with the creator of the world.

Triumph for those who believe

But that great storm was in fact a day of triumph for the wise builder. His building held. His labour was not wasted because it was founded on the rock.

And similarly, that day will be a day of rejoicing for those who have heard, believed and **done** the words of Jesus.

Those who build their lives on Jesus have been delivered from wrath to come. They have obeyed his word, trusted in His work of salvation and turned away from their sinful lifestyle. Therefore, they can look forward to the day of their death, knowing that they will be judged based on the merit of Jesus not their own merit. They cling to the rock and He promises to bring them home to glory.

Keep persisting

This is a great encouragement for the true Christian.

Following Jesus is not the path of least resistance. It is not the way our instinct chooses. But it is the way of life, so it is well worth persisting.

You may get mocked and ridiculed. People may wonder why you are building your life on Jesus. Why are you spending all this time effort and money because of some event in the future.

We see the world around us and it is easy to ask those questions ourselves. Why can't I just do it my way? They seem to be having so much fun. Their lives seem so much easier?

But we cannot deceive ourselves and we must hear the encouragement here. The storm is coming. This world will not last. ¹ Stand firm. Keep building on the rock.

Hell for those who do not believe

But that great storm was a day of disaster for the foolish builder.

*²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, **and it fell, and great was the fall of it.***

After the storm the builder has nothing left. His house is a complete collapse because it was founded on the sand.

In the same, anyone who does not build his life around the person and truths of Jesus will lose their life. When they reject Jesus as the foundation of their life they look forward to being cast into Hell.

Again and again the bible is clear on this. Revelation 20: 12 and 15 paints a sobering picture of what those who reject Jesus.

¹² And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done

.... And continuing in verse 15...

¹⁵ And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

¹ Just like the story of Noah: It had never rained, Took a lot of work and time, Cause for ridicule, Saved his life

Heed the warning

So we must heed the warning. We must not deceive ourselves. We must not wait for that final day when it will be too late. When the storm is upon you, it is too late. We live in a dangerous world. Death is but a moment away.

Jesus tells us this warning because it is possible to check the foundations before the storm. We cannot just “wait and see”. There is too much at stake.

Take the time to heed the warning. Is your life founded on the rock? Are you trusting in Christ to save you from hell? Have you heard his word and let that change your life?

Conclusion

I find it fascinating that Jesus finishes his great sermon with this parable.

With this picture of a foolish man’s house collapsing into rubble.

That is the fate of anyone who hears the words of Jesus and does not do them.

There are two possible responses – To hear and do, or to hear and not to do.

Your response will chart how you build your life.

Your life will either be founded on Jesus or on something else. On rock or on sand.

If it is founded on Jesus, he promises you eternal life. If it is founded on anything else than Jesus, you are destined to hell.

These words are a warning to those who are deceiving themselves, but they are also an encouragement to all those who's life is founded on the rock.

What an encouragement to know the storm is coming, but our obedience in Christ gives us confidence that we will stand firm.

A life of obedience is truly a life of confidence.

Let us pray.