

## CONSTRUCTING A WELL-BUILT LIFE (Matthew 7:24-29)

**Matthew 7:24-29** “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.”<sup>28</sup> **And so it was,** when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching,<sup>29</sup> for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.

**Chuck Yeager,** the famed American test pilot, was flying an F-86 Sabre over a lake in the Sierras when he decided to buzz a friend's house near the edge of the lake. During a slow roll, he suddenly felt his aileron lock. Yeager said (quote): "It was a hairy moment, flying about 150 feet off the ground and upside down."

A lesser pilot might have panicked with fatal results, but Yeager reduced power, pushed up the nose, and sure enough, the aileron unlocked. Climbing to 15,000 feet, where it was safer, Yeager tried the maneuver again. Every time that he rolled, the problem reoccurred.

Yeager knew three or four pilots had died under similar circumstances, but to date, investigators were puzzled as to the source of the Sabre's fatal flaw. Yeager went to his superior with a report, and the inspectors went to work. They found that a bolt on the aileron cylinder was installed upside down.

Eventually, the culprit was found in a North American plant. He was an older man on the assembly line who ignored instructions about how to insert that bolt, because, by golly, he knew that bolts were supposed to be placed head up, not head down. In a sad commentary, Yeager says that nobody ever told the man how many pilots he had killed.

If you've ever had to put together **a Christmas gift with several** pages of instructions, you know that it can get old very quickly. Now, if you quit using the instructions and your daughter's Easy-Bake Oven doesn't work right, that's one thing, but if you are building **an F-86 Sabre** and you don't follow instructions, that's a whole different matter.

In the text we read this morning, **Matthew 7:24-29**, Jesus gave a parable about two builders. They both build but only one house is still standing after heavy storms have passed through. The other one collapsed—what insurers call a “complete loss.”

This morning, what I would like to do is to speak on how you and I can avoid this kind of disaster.

## **Title:** Constructing a Well-Built Life

### **(Prayer)**

I have to admit that there have been times in my life when I thought I could put together a Christmas present or birthday gift for the kids without following the instructions, only to find out that I did it incorrectly and had to take most or all of it apart and start over. It would have been a lot better if I had just followed the instructions from the get-go.

In our parable today, it is clear that Jesus would much rather we build our lives and families on His instructions—the Bible—than try to do it on our own and mess it all up.

First, allow me to share with you...

### **1. Christ's Requirements for a Well-Built Life**

How do we build well-built lives? V. 24 tells us:

**"...whoever hears** these sayings of Mine, and **does** them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock..."

Jesus gives us two very simple requirements:

1. First, we must hear the Word of God;
2. Second, we must obey the Word of God we have encountered.

Many Scriptures stress the first necessity— of **hearing** God's Word.

e.g., **The Parable of Soils** — All four **heard** the word (that's good!), only one produced fruit pleasing to God (that's bad).

#### **The second requirement for a well-built life is obeying God's Word.**

In the parallel passage in Luke, Jesus said that the wise man:

**Luke 6:48** *"...dug deep and laid a foundation upon the rock."*

Digging deep and laying the foundation of a house is hard work! And so is a life of obedience to God. (Anyone can come and listen to a sermon; to obey what is preached is a whole other matter.)

The wise man's house was a well-built house because he did something the foolish man didn't take the time to do (**something that takes time and effort**) — he **dug deep** and laid a foundation upon the rock — the truths of God's Word.

(Q: Are you digging deep into God's Word? Are you?)

In our parable, one man heard God's Word and **embraced** it—he put it into practice. The other heard God's Word and **ignored** it.

Jesus said that people who truly love Him don't ignore it.

**John 14:23** “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word. . .”

You can be a **Christian** and ignore God's Word but you can't **love God** and ignore it.

These are Christ's **requirements** for a well-built life. Now we will consider:

## 2. **Christ's Reasons for a Well-Built Life**

Someone once described the Christian life as “**heading into** a storm, being in a storm, or coming out of a storm.”

**The first reason we need a life built on obedience to God's Word is that storms are inevitable.** They are going to come. Jesus didn't say, “If it rains”; “If there are floods”; “If the winds blow.” He said in v 25:

“...and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew...”

There are unavoidable storms that come into our marriages, our finances, and our families; they rain down upon us with disappointment and flood us with physical illness and disease. They come into every aspect of life, but they do come. It doesn't make any difference whether we've built upon the rock or upon the sand, the storms are coming to us all. Torrential wind and rains deluge both kinds of builders. **It isn't a matter of whether or not we're going to have storms in our lives. The question is, how are we building our lives,** and will we survive the storms when they do come?

Another reason we need lives built on obedience to God is that...

**Storms are uncontrollable.** We can't control torrential rainstorms coming down in sheets. We can't harness floods. On television several times a year, we see houses washing away, buildings crumbling, mountainsides shifting because of floods. We can't control the blowing of the wind. The only thing we can control is whether we will obey God or ignore Him.

**A third reason to build our houses well in obedience to God is to avoid the inescapable consequences of poorly built houses.** Jesus

said the one who built his house upon the sand lost everything when the storms hit. The same rains, floods, and winds that struck the house on the rock struck the house built on sand, and it totally collapsed. In v. 27, Jesus said, “...and great was the fall of it.”

I don't know how Jesus could have given us a clearer warning than He did in this parable. In His day, they didn't have homeowner's insurance. If you spent 20 years building a beautiful home inside and out and a tornado or flood destroyed it---it was a total loss.

**Here is the bottom line:** if you are only hearing God's Word, but not ordering your lives according to it, you are not prepared for life's storms.

(And BTW, if you are here today and if you are not a born-again Christian, you are not prepared for the storm called death.)

### 3. **Christ's Rewards for a Well-Built Life**

What are the rewards of a well-built life—a life built on obedience to God's Word?

**First, we endure the storms.** Financial, relational, work-related—whatever the storms may be, we can endure them with God's help.

**Secondly, a life that is well built will enrich the lives of others.** When we dig deep and build our lives on the Word of God, it will overflow into the lives of people we meet. We become change points in their lives. We can impact others and make an eternal difference in their lives.

**The third reward of a well-built life is continuing spiritual growth.** What if the storms come? When the storm is over, we can praise God for His faithfulness again. We discover more and more about who He is. When we are faithful to God, listening to His voice and obeying it, He will honor and bless us.

**Fourth, a well-built life results in eternal rewards.**

**Revelation 22:12**-----“...behold, I am coming quickly, **and My reward is with Me**, to give to every one according to his work.”

**The Citicorp Building** in NY was built in 1977 (and was the 7th tallest in world at that time).

The structural engineer who designed it, William LeMessurier, was elected into the National Academy of Engineering shortly after it opened.

But one year after it opened, LeMessurier came to a frightening

realization. It was flawed. Joints that should have been welded were only bolted. If the right winds hit the building, it would collapse.

This was the biggest professional storm of LeMessurier's life. If he blew the whistle on himself, he would face lawsuits, bankruptcy, and professional disgrace. He thought about suicide as well as just remaining silent—but he knew that thousands of peoples' lives were at stake.

So he did what he had to do. It took three months to fix the problem and cost millions of dollars. But LeMessurier's career and reputation were not destroyed—but enhanced. One engineer commended for being a man who had the courage to say, "I've got a problem; I made a problem; let's fix the problem."

**Closing comments/invitation**