

THE WISE AND FOOLISH BUILDER

MATHEW 07:24–27

Introduction: Jesus Christ, The Versatile Carpenter

Jesus Christ was a carpenter by trade and profession. He knew houses; He knew the building trade.

Several important matters about building a house need to be noted here.

1. Hearing instructions. This is critical, for a person must heed the instructions in order to know how to build the house.
 - a. A person must hear and follow (obey) the instructions.
 - b. A person must hear and build upon what he hears, ever learning the very best materials and methods for construction. Builders must always be “laying up treasures for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age” (1 Tim. 6:19).
2. Selecting the foundation. This is also critical, for selection of the site and material determine the future of the house.
 - a. A person must build upon a solid foundation. There is only one foundation upon which to build: the rock (1 Cor. 3:11).
 - b. A person must make sure of his call and choice to build (2 Pet. 1:10).
 - c. A person must know that building upon rock takes time and skill.
3. Counting the cost. This, too, is critical: it is brought out by Christ in another passage. Beginning and not finishing the house brings mockery and shame (Lk. 14:28-30).

Several introductory applications are clearly seen in this picture of house building.

1. Every person has a house — a life — to build. How he builds his life determines his destiny, not just for this life but for eternity. How he builds his life makes all the difference...
 - between success and failure
 - between reward and loss
 - between standing and falling
 - between life and death
 - between acceptance and rejection
 2. There is only one Foundation for every life: Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 3:11). He is the Rock upon which both individuals and churches are to build (Mt. 16:18).
 3. Everyone either builds his life upon this world or upon Christ (heaven itself). Jesus teaches that there are two kinds of builders.
 - a. A wise builder: hears the instructions and obeys them (vv. 24-25).
 - b. A foolish builder: hears the instructions and does not obey them (vv. 26-27).
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I. *Mathew 07:24–25 The Foundation of Life, The Wise Builder*

The wise builder is a man who hears the instructions and obeys them.

1. The wise builder builds a house.
 - a. Every person has a house to build, a life to build. Once in the world, we cannot escape the fact — we are building our lives. How we build our lives determines our eternal destiny.
 - b. God’s own Son instructs a man how to build. A man hears and follows (obeys) the instructions or hears and rejects (disobeys) the instructions and builds his own way.
 - c. As Christ says, His sayings, instructions, and words are the materials which determine the structure and fate of our lives. Our lives and our destinies depend upon how we respond to the sayings of Christ.

Thought 1. Every man is put into one of two classes by Christ. There is the class of men called “wise” and there is the class of men called “foolish.” How we build our lives determines in which class we are placed.

Thought 2. Both builders hear and receive the instructions. Christ is talking about people who...

- are in the church
- have Christian parents
- have Christian friends
- have a source of some Christian influence

2. The wise builder builds upon a rock.
 - a. Christ is the only Rock, the only Foundation upon which we can build and structure our lives.

1 Cor 3:11 *For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

Eph 2:20 *Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.*

1 Pet 2:4-5 *As you come to him, the living Stone — rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him — you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*

- b. The Lord is not a lifeless rock, but “the living stone” (1 Pet. 2:4). When we come to Him as “the living stone” we are “built into a spiritual house” (1 Pet. 2:2-5).
 - 1) We are to thirst after His Word: we are to “crave for pure spiritual milk” (1 Pet. 2:2).
 - 2) We grow (are built up) through His Word (1 Pet. 2:2).
 - 3) We taste that the Lord is gracious through His Word (1 Pet. 2:3).
 - 4) We come to the Lord as to a living stone through His Word (1 Pet. 2:4).
 - 5) We are built up as a spiritual house by Him through His Word (1 Pet. 2:5).

Our lives and destinies are determined by what we do with the Word, the “sayings” of the Lord Jesus.

1 Pet 2:2-5 Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation, now that you have tasted that the Lord is good. As you come to him, the living Stone — rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him — you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Thought 1. Building upon the rock takes time and commitment and energy. We have to deny ourselves, give up slumber, and apply ourselves ever so diligently.

Thought 2. The man who builds upon the Rock is wise, prudent and sensible (Prov. 16:21). He knows several things.

- 1) Where he has come from (his instructions).
 - 2) Why he is here (to build an excellent house).
 - 3) Where he is going (the kind of house or life he should build). He sees the finished product by faith and hope.
4. The wise builder faces a storm. There have always been storms in life, and there always will be. The wise man is not exempt from the storms because he builds an excellent house. In fact, the major reason for building a solid house is to assure that he will be able to weather all storms. It rains “on the righteous and the unrighteous” (Mt. 5:45).

Mat 5:45 “That you may be sons of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous.”

Mat 18:7 “Woe to the world because of the things that cause people to sin! Such things must come, but woe to the man through whom they come!”

Thought 1. All kinds of rain and storms come. There are storms of...

- sickness • sorrow • nervous stress • neglect
- rejection • accidents • handicaps • complaints
- loneliness • mistreatment • sin • pressure
- suffering • doubt • misunderstanding • disease
- emotions • tension • disappointment • hospitalization
- temptations • poverty • failure • pain
- loss • death • abuse

4. The wise builder builds wisely: the difference is the foundation. One thing alone determines if a man is truly wise: the kind of foundation he lays in this life.

1 Tim 6:19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Psa 32:7 *You are my hiding place; you will protect me from trouble and surround me with songs of deliverance.*

Thought 1. If a person builds his life upon Christ, he never falls, no matter the severity of the storm. This reason is clearly seen in the promises of God.

1) God accepts us in Christ (the beloved, Eph. 1:6); He adopts us as children of His.

Gal 4:4-6 *But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons. Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, “Abba, Father.”*

Eph 1:6-7 *To the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.*

2) God promises to provide the necessities of life.

Mat 6:31-33 *“So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” (see Mat 6:25-34)*

3) God promises to work out all things (all storms) together for good to those who build wisely.

Rom 8:28 *And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*

4) God blesses those who “hear the word of God and obey it” (Lk. 11:28).

5) Christ promises joy to those who hear and receive the things He said.

John 15:11 *“I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.” (see John 13:17)*

6) The Lord promises to deliver the believer into His heavenly kingdom when the believer passes from this world into the next.

2 Tim 4:18 *The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.*

Prov 3:35 *The wise inherit honour, but fools he holds up to shame. (see P rov 15:24)*

Thought 2. “The wise in heart” shall receive more and more instructions from the Lord. His life shall be directed day by day through all the storms of life, even through eternity (Prov 10:8; Jn. 16:13-15; Heb. 13:5).

II. *Mathew 07:26–27 Foundation of Life, The Foolish Builder*

The foolish builder is a man who hears the instructions and does not obey them.

1. The foolish builder builds a house, but note something of critical importance and interest.
 - a. He hears the instructions of the Master Builder. This means that he is in the church and he has some Christian influence from someplace. He receives the seed, the Word, through church, parents, radio, books, friends, tapes, or television (Mt. 13:4).
 - b. He is in a most dangerous position. He knows how to build, but he chooses not to build according to instructions. How foolish not to follow instructions when building a house!

Prov 11:28 *Whoever trusts in his riches will fall, but the righteous will thrive like a green leaf.*

Prov 28:26 *He who trusts in himself is a fool, but he who walks in wisdom is kept safe.*

Isa 47:10 *You have trusted in your wickedness and have said, 'No one sees me.' Your wisdom and knowledge mislead you when you say to yourself, 'I am, and there is none besides me.'*

Jer 17:5 *This is what the Lord says: "Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the Lord."*

Ezek 13:11 *Therefore tell those who cover it with whitewash that it is going to fall. Rain will come in torrents, and I will send hailstones hurtling down, and violent winds will burst forth.*

Ezek 33:31 *My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain.*

Thought 1. There is no middle ground. Once we hear, we either build wisely (obey) or build foolishly (disobey).

Thought 2. There are those who hear time and again, get up and go out, and still do not follow the instructions of the Master Builder.

Thought 3. The counsel is clear: "Listen to advice and accept instruction, and in the end you will be wise" (Prov. 19:20).

2. The foolish builder builds upon sand. This is the depth of foolishness, as Christ well illustrates. Imagine a man building a house. He knows how to build it; he knows that he should build it upon rock. But he goes out and builds it upon sand. The sand is anything other than Christ (1 Cor. 3:11; see 1 Jn. 2:15-16; 2 Cor. 6:17-18).

⇒ There is the sand of the world, the material possessions and wealth of the world.

⇒ There is the sand of the flesh, the pleasures that stimulate and satisfy it.

⇒ There is the sand of fame and recognition and the pride of it.

Any honest and thinking person knows that sand cannot withstand serious storms either in this life or in the life to come. Therefore, any life built upon sand is doomed to collapse.

Heb 2:3 *How shall we escape if we ignore such a great salvation? This salvation, which was first announced by the Lord, was confirmed to us by those who heard him.*

Prov 11:5 *The righteousness of the blameless makes a straight way for them, but the wicked are brought down by their own wickedness.*

Jer 6:15 *“Are they ashamed of their loathsome conduct? No, they have no shame at all; they do not even know how to blush. So they will fall among the fallen; they will be brought down when I punish them,” says the Lord.*

1 Cor 3:13-15 *His work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each man’s work. If what he has built survives, he will receive his reward. If it is burned up, he will suffer loss; he himself will be saved, but only as one escaping through the flames.*

1 Th 5:2-3 *For you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, “Peace and safety,” destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. (see 2 Pet 3:4,9-13)*

Psa 36:12 *See how the evildoers lie fallen — thrown down, not able to rise!*

Prov 6:15 *Therefore disaster will overtake him in an instant; he will suddenly be destroyed — without remedy.*

Thought 1. Tragedy! This man heard what the prophets and righteous men of old desired to hear (Mt. 13:17; 1 Pet. 1:10). What a privilege he had, but what an abuse of privilege! Week after week, year after year he heard, yet he never followed the instructions on how to build his life.

Mat 13:17 *“For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.”*

1 Pet 1:10-11 *Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.*

Thought 2. The foolish builder is like the man who receives the seed “along the path.” He is in church, under some proper (Christian) instruction about how to build his life. But he is off to the side. He deliberately puts himself there. And he refuses to receive the instruction (Word). He refuses to be stirred or warned, ignoring and neglecting the instructions and warnings.

Thought 3. Even religion can be sinking sand (see Mt.7:15-20; 7:21-23).

Mat 7:21-23 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’ ”

Rom 10:3-4 Since they did not know the righteousness that comes from God and sought to establish their own, they did not submit to God’s righteousness. Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Thought 4. Many hear, but few are willing to heed. There are many foolish builders and only a few wise builders.

Mat 7:13-14 “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

Mat 7:22 “Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ ”

Thought 5. We should not receive the instructions (the grace of God) in vain (2 Cor. 6:1). Yet how many sit and receive instructions time after time and never guide their lives according to the plan?

Thought 6. There are many who profess loyalty and respect (even love) for the Master Builder, yet they go right on building their way, as they will.

Ezek 33:31-32 My people come to you, as they usually do, and sit before you to listen to your words, but they do not put them into practice. With their mouths they express devotion, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice.

Thought 7. A hearer only deceives himself. The doer is the man who is to be blessed. He will withstand the storms of life and judgment.

James 1:22-25 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it — he will be blessed in what he does.

3. The foolish builder faces a storm. The fact is clear and descriptive, easily pictured.
 - a. “The rain came down.” Pellets of rain or trials do fall upon men. No man stops them. Sometimes the rain or trials fall slowly and in small drops; sometimes they fall

rapidly and in large drops. The house built upon the sand is eroded away by both the rains and the trials of life.

- b. “The streams rose.” Floods of trials do come against us. The floods cannot be stopped. The house built upon sand cannot stand. The sand is washed away by the floods of trials.
- c. “The winds blew.” The winds of trial do blow against us, and no man can stop them. The force ranges from small to great, and no matter how much they are dreaded or feared, they come with whatever force is packed within their nature. Again, the house built upon the sand has its foundation blown away by the winds of trial.

Thought 1. Every man faces the rains and storms of life. They wait upon no man, prepared or not.

Thought 2. A terrible storm is coming at death and in the Great Day of Judgment, a storm against which no man can stand unless he is held up by Christ (Joel 2:31; Mt. 24:51; 25:30, 46).

- 4. The foolish builder builds foolishly: there was great destruction — the difference was the foundation. The house fell. If we do not follow the Lord’s sayings, His instructions, we will see our houses fall and collapse. The trials of this life and the great trial to come will beat upon our houses and condemn them to destruction: “And it fell with a great crash.”

Thought 1. Every man’s work shall be made manifest. Our work is to be tested in this life through many trials, and in the next life by Christ. Great will be “the fall” of our lives if they are not built upon Christ. The man who built his house upon sand will have to face Christ in that day (1 Cor. 3:13).

Thought 2. The man who builds on sand is hopeless.

Job 27:8 *For what hope has the godless when he is cut off, when God takes away his life?*

Job 8:13,15 *Such is the destiny of all who forget God; so perishes the hope of the godless...He leans on his web, but it gives way; he clings to it, but it does not hold.*

Thought 3. When do we need a solid house the most? Is it not when the winds begin to blow and the storms come? But note: when the storm begins, it is too late to build the house. How tragic: to build and then experience the collapse of our lives when the storms come!

Thought 4. Storms can come anytime, anywhere. They can come today: through accident, through some bad news, through some tragedy — whatever. The day is coming when it will be too late to build. ■