



WHAT TO DO WHEN THE BOTTOM FALLS OUT

Preaching and Teaching Resources

ADRIAN ROGERS





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What to Do When the Bottom Falls Out

SERMON REFERENCE: Matthew 7:24-27

LWF SERMON NUMBER: #2140

Life, in its very nature, is tragic; sooner or later, the storms of life will come our way. The difference between a life built on the Word of God, and one that isn't, lies underground. Before the bottom falls out of life, we must examine the foundation.

In Matthew 7, Jesus describes two houses: one built on a rock, and the other built on sand. We do not see the differences between the houses until the storm comes. The results remind us why we must build our lives on the solid rock of Jesus Christ.

Matthew 7:24 says, "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..." This passage reminds us that to be sure of our rock-solid faith, we must have, hear, and heed the Word of God.

The enemy will war against the church through persecution and infiltration. There are many false teachers who set out to confuse us with empty words. The Word of God is meant to make us more like Jesus; if it does not, something is wrong.

Once we hear the Word, we must do what it says, otherwise, our faith is dead. (See James 1:22.) Matthew 7:25 says, "...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."

Adrian Rogers says, "The faith that cannot be tested is the faith that cannot be trusted...The test of your faith is your stability in the storm."

If we base our understanding of God's love on our circumstances, our understanding will constantly change. But His love is unchanging; He has not abandoned us in the storm.

People cave in during life's storms when they don't have anything solid to stand on.

Remember Peter and Judas, two of Jesus' disciples. Both were entrusted with responsibilities in Jesus' ministry—but their differences run deep. When the storm came, both disciples caved in different ways. However, Peter—despite his failings—had a foundation that Judas did not have; he was able to stand again.

Life Application

Make certain you have a rock-solid foundation for your faith.

1. Have the Word of God: beware of false prophets.
2. Hear the Word of God: don't let it blow past you.
3. Heed the Word of God: do what it says.



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1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Do you know someone, or an entire family, that was faithful to the church?
 - i) They were seemingly serving the Lord and presumably happy in Jesus.
 - ii) Then, some calamity came, and they dropped out.
 - (1) The bottom fell out of life, and they didn't know what to do.
- b) What do you do when the bottom falls out?
 - i) You examine the foundation.
- c) Matthew 7:24-27
 - i) Life in nature is tragic.
 - (1) Sooner or later, we are going to get sick.
 - (2) Sooner or later, we are going to die.
 - (3) Life in its very essence is tragic apart from God.
 - ii) In this passage, the Jesus is speaking about our lives as if they are houses.
 - (1) We all need houses to live in.
 - (a) A house is for shelter.
 - (b) A house is for security.
 - (c) A house is for sufficiency, satisfaction, and supply.
 - (d) A house is a place of retreat.
 - (e) A house is for serenity.
 - (2) Your soul also needs a house.
 - (a) There needs to be a sanctuary for the soul.
 - (b) There needs to be a place of security and sufficiency where your spirit can dwell.
 - (c) Jesus uses the analogy of an earthly house to speak of a spiritual house.
 - (i) A sanctuary for the soul to live in.
 - (d) All of us are building that kind of a house.
 - (i) We cannot live in someone else's house; we must live in the house we build.
 - d) In this passage in Matthew 7, Jesus told of two kinds of builders.
 - i) He told of builders that outwardly looked very similar.
 - (1) Both of these builders had the same purpose.
 - (a) They were building a house.
 - (2) They built in the same place because Jesus told of a storm that struck both houses.
 - (a) Matthew 7:24-27
 - (3) They had the same plan with a floor, walls, and a roof.
 - (a) There may have been some differences, but there was much similarity.
 - ii) When we look at people outwardly, there are very definite, superficial similarities.
 - (1) There is a distinctive difference in everyone which cannot be seen.
 - (a) The difference is underground; it deals with the foundation.



- e) One of the homes that Jesus talked about had a rock foundation, and the other home was built on shifting sand.
 - i) So it is with people today.
 - (1) There are those today who are built upon a solid foundation.
 - (2) There are those who have endeavored to build upon the sand.
 - (a) The sand builder has no foundation.
- f) Outwardly, the two houses looked the same, but the storm displayed the difference.
 - i) When the storm came, the difference in these two houses was revealed.
 - ii) The house built on the sand fell because it had no foundation.
 - iii) When the wind, the rains, and the flood came, the house that was built upon the rock stood.
 - iv) The difference was underground.
- g) What do you do when the bottom falls out?
 - i) You go back and examine the foundation.
 - ii) If you realize that the bottom fell out because you had no foundation, then you begin to build again.
 - (1) But this time, you build on solid rock.
 - iii) In today's message, we will look at the foundation of a rock-solid faith and how to have it, what it is, and what it is like.

2) THE SURETY OF ROCK-SOLID FAITH (MATTHEW 7:15-16, 24)

- a) There are three things that are necessary for us to have rock-solid faith:
 - i) We must have the Word of God.
 - ii) We must hear the Word of God.
 - iii) We must heed the Word of God.
- b) Jesus said that the foundation is the Word of God.
 - i) Matthew 7:24
 - ii) It is the sayings of Jesus, the Word of God, that gives us this foundation.
- c) Make sure you have the Word of God.
 - i) Matthew 7:15
 - (1) We may be building on the shifting sand of philosophy or false religion or some other quagmire rather than on the Word of God because there are many false prophets out in the world.
 - ii) If Jesus says to beware, then we ought to listen.
 - (1) Our Lord is talking about false prophets, people who are in religion.
 - iii) The devil is not opposed to religion; it is one of his chief tools.
 - (1) There are two ways that Satan tries to war against the church:
 - (a) Persecution
 - (b) Infiltration
 - (2) Infiltration is more dangerous than persecution.
 - (a) In Matthew 7:15, Jesus spoke of infiltration.
 - (i) He spoke of those who pretend to be prophets of God.
 - 1. They wear sheep's clothing, but it is a disguise.
 - 2. They are really the enemy within the gates.



- iv) Paul spoke to the elders of the Ephesian church.
 - (1) He was about to leave them, and he was afraid that they might allow false prophets to come into the church.
 - (2) Acts 20:28-29
 - (a) Paul said to take heed and be careful that you have the Word of God.
- v) When you look for the devil, never fail to look in the pulpit.
 - (1) Satan occupies many pulpits today.
 - (2) 2 Corinthians 11:13-15
 - (a) Though a man may have on a clerical robe, he may not have been divinely anointed and appointed.
 - (i) He has been ordained of the devil.
 - (3) Make certain that you have the Word of God.
 - (4) Look beneath the fleece.
 - (a) Satan is a master of disguise.
- vi) In the world today, there are all kinds (denominations) of religions.
 - (1) Christianity, Buddhism, Islam, etc.
- vii) But there are actually only two kinds of religion:
 - (1) The true
 - (2) The false
- viii) How are we going to know that we have the Word of God?
 - (1) Matthew 7:16
 - (a) We know them by their fruits.
 - (2) It is the root that produces the fruit.
 - (a) If we have a tree and we don't like the kind of fruit it is bearing, then what might we do with it?
 - (i) Prune it
 - 1. But that is not going to change the fruit.
 - a. All that does is strengthen the root.
 - (ii) Transplant it
 - 1. Many people try to do that.
 - a. They go from one church to another without being born again.
 - (iii) Cultivate it
 - 1. Today, there are a lot of church growth conferences.
 - a. But these conferences are not based on the Word of God.
 - 2. Attendees are taught how to fertilize weeds.
 - (iv) Decorate it
 - 1. But we cannot change the fruit without changing the root.
 - a. The root produces the fruit.
 - (3) The fruit reveals the root.
 - (a) Sometimes we look at a fruit tree and can't tell what kind of tree it is until it bears fruit.
 - (b) Jesus said that we will know them by their fruits.
 - (i) Matthew 7:16
 - (c) A person's ministry is found in John 15:16.
 - (i) Are you becoming more like Jesus Christ?



- 1. That is the fruit.
 - (ii) Is the Word of God making you more like Jesus?
 - (iii) Galatians 5:22
 - 1. This is the fruit of the Spirit.
 - 2. This is just a description of the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (4) The seed determines both the root and the fruit.
 - (a) The seed is the Word of God.
 - (b) When the Gospel is preached, seed is being planted.
- ix) Make certain that you have the Word of God.
 - (1) Beware of false prophets.
 - (2) Many people are looking for a church that suits them.
 - (a) We need to look for a church that suits God.
 - (b) Find a church that is based rock-solid on the Word of God.
- d) Make sure you hear the Word of God.
 - i) Matthew 7:24
 - ii) It is one thing to belong to a Bible-believing church and to have a copy of the Word of God in your home, but have you really heard the Word of God?
 - (1) Have you really listened to the Word of God?
 - iii) In order to do this, you must dig deeply.
 - (1) Luke 6:48
 - (2) Sometimes we have to dig to get to a rock.
 - (3) Many people want to be spoon-fed a little truth on Sundays, but they are not digging.
 - (a) Their spiritual houses don't have foundations.
 - (i) They may not have the Word of God.
 - (ii) They don't hear the Word of God because they are not listening.
 - 1. They are not digging.
 - (4) Why did the man build his house upon the sand?
 - (a) It was easier, cheaper, and quicker.
 - (5) The man who built his house upon the rock dug deep.
 - (a) We must have the Word of God.
 - (b) Romans 10:17
 - (i) The word "hear" in this verse doesn't mean to simply let the sound waves come into our ears.
- e) We must heed the Word of God.
 - i) Matthew 7:24
 - ii) We must do the Word of God.
 - iii) James 1:22
 - (1) Someone who does not obey what he has heard is self-deceived.
 - (a) Jesus calls him a fool.
 - (i) Matthew 7:26
 - (b) His faith is dead faith.
 - iv) James 2:14-20
 - (1) In the Greek, verse 14 says, "Can that faith save him?"
 - (2) Without works, they are just empty words.



- (3) We are saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone.
 - (a) It is always accompanied by works.
- v) The devil is more orthodox than some preachers.
 - (1) The devil at least knows the holiness of Jesus Christ.
 - (2) The demons cringed and trembled at Jesus.
 - (a) Luke 4:34
 - (3) There are people who have no more faith than the devil.
 - (a) They have intellectual faith, but they do not live by their faith.
 - (i) James 2:26
- f) What good is a body of truth without the life of the Spirit?
 - i) We might do an autopsy on our faith and see if it is the real faith.
 - (1) As the body without the brain is dead, faith without works is dead.
 - (2) If we have faith, then it is going to show in our works.

3) THE STABILITY OF ROCK-SOLID FAITH (MATTHEW 7:25, 27)

- a) We can expect storms whether we are saved or lost.
- b) Matthew 7:25, 27
 - i) These verses tell us that the storm beat upon both houses.
- c) Notice how the Lord Jesus described the storms:
 - i) The rain fell.
 - (1) That is pressure from above.
 - ii) The floods came.
 - (1) That is pressure from beneath.
 - iii) The winds blew.
 - (1) That is pressure from all around.
- d) Our faith is going to be tested.
 - i) The faith that cannot be tested is the faith that cannot be trusted.
 - ii) Our faith will not be tested in the sunshine, our faith will be tested in the storm.
 - iii) The test of our faith is not popularity or profession.
 - iv) The test of our faith is our stability in the storm.
- e) Hebrews 11 was written to a group of people who were about to abandon the faith because of great persecution that was coming upon the church.
 - i) The writer of Hebrews told about the exciting victories of faith.
 - (1) Daniel in the lion's den
 - (2) Moses at the Red Sea
 - (3) Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were taken out of the fiery furnace.
 - ii) At the end of the chapter, he talks about the enduring virtues of faith.
 - (1) "And others were stoned, some were sawn asunder, some endured a strange trial of affliction."
 - (a) Hebrews 11:36-39
- f) Faith does not mean that we are not going to have a storm.
 - i) The storms beat upon both houses.
 - (1) Matthew 7:24-27



- ii) If you get your theology from circumstances, then sooner or later when the storms come, you will get the idea that God doesn't love you.
 - (1) John 11:5
 - (a) Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus.
 - (2) John 11:14-15
 - (a) But Lazarus died, and the Lord said that He was glad.
 - (3) Difficulty does not mean that God has abandoned you.
- iii) Habakkuk 3:17-18
- g) Faith is not receiving from God the things that you want.
 - i) Faith is accepting from God the things that He gives.
 - (1) The winds, the rains, and the floods beat upon both houses.

4) THE SECURITY OF ROCK-SOLID FAITH (MATTHEW 7:25)

- a) People cave in because they have nothing to stand on.
 - i) The bottom falls out.
 - ii) They are all house and no foundation.
 - iii) They have profession without possession.
- b) Matthew 7:22-23
- c) 1 John 2:19
 - i) When the doctor's report came, when the job was gone, when the child died, when calamity came, and when the bottom fell out, they threw in the towel and quit.
 - (1) The winds, the rains, and the storms were too much for them.
- d) Had we examined Simon Peter and Judas, which of these two apostles would have been the most likely to succeed?
 - i) We would have thought Judas.
 - (1) He was the treasurer.
 - (a) Who is made the treasurer?
 - (i) The person whom we trust most.
 - ii) Peter kept putting his foot in his mouth.
 - (1) He was always so arrogant, self-satisfied, and self-reliant.
 - iii) Outwardly, their houses looked the same.
 - iv) Both of these men went through a storm.
 - (1) The storm came to Judas.
 - (a) It was fear, greed, and selfish glorification.
 - (b) There was the storm of his betrayal of Jesus.
 - (c) There was the storm of his remorse and guilt, and he committed suicide.
 - (i) The bottom fell out.
 - (2) The storm came to Simon Peter.
 - (a) Luke 22:31-32
 - (b) Jesus knew that Peter had faith.
 - (3) Some people believe that Judas lost his salvation.
 - (a) Judas never was saved.
 - (i) John 6:70
 - (ii) John 6:64



1. Jesus didn't make a mistake; it was all a part of His plan.
 2. He knew Judas had no faith.
- (4) Jesus knew that Peter was weak and stumbling, but Peter had faith.
- v) Matthew 16:13-18
- (1) Jesus asked the disciple who the people thought he was.
 - (2) Jesus asked Peter, "Who do you say that I am?"
 - (3) Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God."
 - (a) Peter did not just figure it out.
 - (b) God the Father revealed this to Peter.
 - (c) Peter had a rock to stand on.
- vi) The difference between Judas and Peter was the foundation.

5) CONCLUSION

- a) Storms come to everybody.
- b) Outwardly, we all look alike.
 - i) But if you want to see the difference, then you have to look beneath the surface to the foundation.
- c) Make certain that you have a rock-solid faith.
 - i) Have the Word of God.
 - (1) Beware of false prophets.
 - ii) Hear the Word of God.
 - (1) Don't let it just blow past you.
 - iii) Heed the Word of God.
 - (1) John 14:21
 - (2) If someone is a hearer of the Word only and not a doer, then he deceives his own heart.
 - (a) James 1:22
- d) Do you know Jesus personally? If not, you can pray to Him today by asking Him to come into your life.
- e) Call upon Jesus today. Repent (turn) from your sins, and turn to Jesus. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins, and acknowledge Him as Lord of your life.
 - i) Romans 3:23
 - ii) Romans 10:9-10
 - iii) Romans 10:13
 - iv) Acts 16:31
 - v) John 3:16



What to Do When the Bottom Falls Out

SERMON REFERENCE: Matthew 7:24-27

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Find Matthew chapter 7 and in a few moments we're going to begin reading in verse 24. As you're looking for Matthew chapter 7, may I ask you a question? Do you know somebody, somebodies, perhaps an entire family, that were faithful to the church, seemingly serving the Lord, presumably happy in Jesus, and then some calamity came and they dropped out, they stopped coming, they seemed to collapse, to fold up, to throw in the towel? The bottom has fallen out of life and they don't know what to do. Maybe they went to the doctor and the doctor diagnosed cancer and really didn't know what to prescribe. Or perhaps a child was hit by an automobile, precious little child, sudden death, no explanation, just an act of carelessness, perhaps the child's fault, perhaps some reckless driver. Or perhaps you've been in a company for a long time, serving that company, doing a good job and then your job is taken. Maybe somebody has undercut you, or maybe the company is just downsizing and you're caught in the downsizing and here you are, many bills and no way to pay them. Maybe you thought you had a wonderful family and a godly husband. Maybe your husband was a pastor, a deacon, an evangelist, maybe one of the leading lights in the church and he announces to you that he's leaving for another woman. These things have happened to people. Things like this and other things have happened to people in this congregation. What do you do? What do you do when the bottom falls out?

Well I'll tell you what you do, you examine the foundation, you examine the foundation when the bottom falls out. Look if you will in Matthew 7 verses 24 through 27. This is a part of the Sermon on the Mount. And our Lord says, "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell not because it was founded upon a rock. And everyone that heareth these sayings of Mine and doeth them not shall be likened unto a foolish man which built his house upon the sand and the rain descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell and great was the fall of it."

Now folks, I might as well tell you that life is in nature tragic. All of us sooner or later are going to get sick. All of us sooner or later, if Jesus does not come, we're going to die. Sooner or later one by one our loved ones will be taken from us. Now I'm not morbid about that, and I'm not even negative about that, but we may as well face it, life in its very essence is tragic apart from God. I hope you understand that, I hope you realize that.

Now what our Lord is doing here is talking about our lives as if they're houses. Now we all need houses to live in. What's a house for? Well, a house is for shelter, a house is for security, a house is for sufficiency and satisfaction, supply. It's our place where we retreat. A house is for serenity and we all need some sort of a house, we want some sort of a place to live in. And so we provide for ourselves some kind of a house. Well your soul also needs a house. There needs to be a sanctuary for the soul. There needs to be a place of security and sufficiency that your spirit can dwell in. And that's what our Lord is talking about now. He's using the analogy of an earthly house to speak of a spiritual house, that is a sanctuary for the soul that we



live in. Now all of us are building that kind of a house. You are, I am. I can't live in a house you've built and you can't live in the house that I've built.

Now in this passage of Scripture Jesus told of two kinds of builders. First of all, He told of builders that, outwardly, they looked very similar; just like the people in this congregation this morning. You all look so nice, you all look so happy, you all look so holy, but I know that you're not all the same. You see, there's outward similarities. For example, if you look at this, both of these builders in the story that Jesus gave, they both had the same purpose; they're building a house. And actually they built in the same place. Because Jesus is going to tell about a storm that struck and evidently both houses were in the same place for the storm struck both houses. And actually they had basically the same plan, no doubt about that. Every house has a floor, walls, and roof. There may be some differences, but there's so much similarity, just like our congregation this morning and just like those of you who are listening to me through television or radio or later on a tape. There is much similarity and as we look at people outwardly, there are very definite superficial similarities. But there's also a distinctive difference in everybody here today and everybody listening on television and the difference is that which cannot be seen, because the difference is underground. It deals with the foundation.

One of these homes Jesus talked about had a rock foundation. The other home Jesus talked about was built on shifting sand. And so in our congregation today. We have those today who are built upon a solid foundation and we have those who have endeavored to build upon the sand. The sand builder has no foundation. Now I want to remind you again, that if you had walked up to these two houses, you would not have been able to tell the difference. Outwardly they looked the same. Do you know what displayed the difference? The storm. When the storm came, then the difference in these two houses that were so similar, then that is revealed. The house that is built on the sand, according to the story Jesus gave, fell; it had no foundation. When the wind, the rains, the flood came, the house that was built upon the rock stood. The difference was underground.

Now, I said, "What do you do when the bottom falls out?" Well, you go back and you examine the foundation and if you realize that the bottom fell out because you had no foundation, then you begin to build again, but this time on solid rock. Now, listen to me very carefully. We're going to talk about that foundation. We're going to talk about rock-solid faith this morning and how to have it, what it is, and what it is like. And again, these are teachings of Jesus. I just hope that my message doesn't even get in the way of what Jesus has said and you will hear Jesus today. And actually, there're three things I want you to think about today as we look in this passage of Scripture, because folks I'm telling you the storm is coming to your life, my life. It's only a matter of time.

First of all, let's talk about the surety, write down the word surety, **the surety of rock-solid faith**. How can we be sure that we have rock-solid faith? Well there are three things that are necessary for you to have rock-solid faith. Number one, you must have the Word of God. Number two, you must hear the Word of God. Number three, you must heed the Word of God. Now Jesus said that the foundation is the Word of God. He said in Matthew 7:24, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine and doeth them is like a man that builds his house upon a rock." So it is the sayings of Jesus, the Word of God, that gives us this foundation. And what we're talking about is the surety of the Word of God.

Now, number one, **let's make sure you have the Word of God**. Back up to verse 15 in this same chapter. Matthew 7 verse 15. Look at it, do you have it, look at it, "Beware of false prophets which come to



you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravening wolves." Now, what He is saying is that you may be building on the shifting sand of philosophy, you may be building on the mud of false religion, you may be building on some quagmire rather than on the Word of God because there are many false prophets that are out there in the world.

Now, you can walk up to a house and it may have a sign posted that says beware of the dog. Well if you're smart you will beware of the dog. And if Jesus says beware of the wolves, beware of false prophets which are like wolves in sheep's clothing, then you ought to listen. Every mother's child in this building needs to hear the Word of the Lord Jesus Christ. Learn this, our Lord is talking about false prophets, people who are in religion. The devil is not opposed to religion, it is one of his chief tools.

Two ways that Satan tries to war against the church. One is persecution. The other is infiltration. Infiltration is more dangerous than persecution and here our Lord is talking about infiltration. He's talking about those who pretend to be prophets of God, they wear sheep's clothing, but it is a disguise, they really are the enemy within the gates. The apostle Paul was talking to the elders of the Ephesian church. Now Paul was about to leave them and he was afraid that they might allow some false prophets to come into the church and friend, this does happen. I know of a very fine church not very far from here that had one of the finest, most godly, Bible-preaching pastors in America as the pastor. When that pastor retired, that church called a man that was not rock-solid in faith and those of us who knew the church and knew the man that they had called said, "How on earth, how on earth could a pulpit committee and a church make such a tragic error?"

Paul was concerned and notice what he said in Acts chapter 20, put this in your margin, verses 28 and 29. He's talking to the church at Ephesus now and he said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves and to all the flock," that is the sheep, "over which the Holy Ghost has made you overseers to feed the church of God which He has purchased with His own blood," and that's my job, to feed the church with the Word of God. And then Paul said, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock." Paul said, "Listen, take heed, be careful that you have the Word of God." Now when you look for the passive, when you look for the devil, never fail to look in the pulpit. Never fail to look in the pulpit. Satan is occupying many pulpits in America today. A little boy told me one time when I was preaching, after I preached, he said, "Pastor, when you were up there preaching this morning, I could see the devil just as plain." Well I hope he meant that he could see the devil that I was describing not portraying.

But here's what the apostle Paul said in Second Corinthians 11 beginning in verse 13 through verse 15, "For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves as the apostles of Christ and no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed as an angel of light and therefore it is no great thing if his ministers could also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness." And though a man may have a clerical robe on, he may stand behind the sacred desk but he has not been divinely anointed, divinely appointed, he has been ordained of the devil. You say, "Pastor Rogers, that is hard." No, that's the kindest thing I can say. I'm telling you, make certain if you're going to build upon the rock that you have the Word of God. Look beneath the fleece. Satan is a master of disguise.

Now in the world today there are all kinds of religions. We have Christianity, we have Buddhism, we have Islam, we have all kinds of religions. And then if you take Christianity, people have even subdivided



Christianity into Protestant and Catholic, Baptist, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, Church of God, Church of Christ. But, folks, there are only two kinds of religion, the true and the false, that's all. Just the true and the false. How are we going to know that we have the Word of God, if we're going to be building upon the solid foundation? Well we're not left to wonder. Look in Matthew 7 verse 16. Jesus said, "You shall know them by their fruits." It's very obvious, I mean we don't have to guess about whether or not we're building on the rock. You can know them by their fruits. Now, now it is the root that produces the fruit.

Now if you've got a tree and you don't like the kind of fruit that it's bearing, what might you do with it? Well, you can prune it but that's not going to change the fruit, all it does is strengthen the root. You could transplant it. You'd be surprised at how many people try to do that, they go from one church to another without being born again, they follow one pastor, one church calls one apostate pastor after another apostate pastor. It's like moving a corpse from one mausoleum to another. You can cultivate this tree, but what good is that? You know, today we have a lot of things called church growth conferences, but those church growth conferences are not based on the Word of God and those who come are taught how to fertilize weeds. Now what could you do if you don't like the fruit? Well, you could get you a bramble and tie figs on it. You could decorate it. No, you see, friend, you cannot change the fruit without changing the root. The root produces the fruit.

Now listen to me, the fruit reveals the root. Sometimes you look at a fruit tree and you can't tell what kind it is. You don't know whatever kind of fruit tree, if you're not a horticulturist you may not be able to tell, but I'll tell you there's one way that you can tell, just wait till it bears fruit. When it bears fruit, if it has peaches on it, it's a peach tree. If it has apples on it, it's an apple tree. That's kind of a no-brainer. And so Jesus said, "By their fruits ye shall know them." While the root produces the fruit and you cannot change the fruit without changing the root, it is the fruit that reveals the root.

You want to know what a man's ministry is, remember what Jesus said in John chapter 15 and verse 16, "You have not chosen Me but I have chosen you and ordained you, that you should go and bring forth fruit and that your fruit should remain." I preached last Sunday about the fruit of this church, it's not the buildings, it's not the budget, it's not the baptisms. Are you becoming more like Jesus Christ? That's the fruit. I mean, is this Word of God making you more like Jesus Christ? The Bible says in Galatians 5 verse 22, "For the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith," that's the fruit of the Spirit. That's just a description of the Lord Jesus Christ. But now listen. The root produces the fruit, the fruit reveals the root, and the seed determines both the root and the fruit. And the seed is the Word of God. The seed is the Word of God. When I'm preaching the Gospel, what I'm doing really is simply sowing, planting seed.

So, listen, we're talking about building on a firm foundation. Number one, make certain that you have the Word of God; beware of false prophets. Somebody says, "Well I'm looking for a church that suits me." Well who are you, God? You better look for one that suits God. You better find one that is based rock-solid on the Word of God. You must have the Word of God.

Number two, **you must hear the Word of God.** Look in Matthew 7 verse 24 again, "Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine." Now, it's one thing for you to belong to a Bible-believing church. It's one thing for you to have a copy of the Word of God in your home. It's one thing for you to subscribe to orthodoxy. But have you really heard the Word of God? Have you really listened to the Word of God? In



order to do this you must dig deep. Now we said the man was building, he built his house upon the rock. Put in your margin Luke 6 verse 48. Jesus is telling this same story and Luke reports and adds some details. Luke says, "He's like a man who's built a house and," watch this, "dug deep." Boys and girls, that mean he dug way down. And dug deep, "and laid the foundation on a rock. And when the flood arose, the streams beat vehemently against that house and could not shake it, for it was founded on a rock." Now what was our Lord saying? He's saying sometimes you have to dig to get to a rock.

Now many of you want to come on Sunday morning and be spoon-fed a little truth, but you're not digging, your home doesn't have any foundation, your spiritual house, because number one you may not have the Word of God and then number two you don't hear the Word of God because you're not listening, you're not digging. You see, why did the man build his house upon the sand? Obvious, it's easy, it's cheaper, it's quicker. If you're looking for a cheap way, an easy way, a lazy way to serve God, I pity you. The man that built his house upon a rock dug deep. You see, you must have the Word of God, Romans 10:17, "Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." So you must hear also the Word of God. When he says "hear" he doesn't mean simply let the sound waves come in your ears. Have you ever told a child to do something and then said, "Now do you hear me?" You know they heard you, but you want to know did they hear you.

Now you must have the Word of God, you must hear the Word of God. Now here's the point, though, **you must heed the Word of God.** Look again in this passage of Scripture in verse 24, "Therefore, whosoever heareth these words of Mine and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock." You have the Word, you hear the Word, you heed the Word of God. You must do the Word of God. I think the apostle James must've remembered Jesus' Sermon on the Mount because James said in James chapter 1 verse 22, "Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." According to that, if you do not obey what you've heard, you're self-deceived.

What kind of a person would come to church on Sunday morning, enjoy the music, rave about the special songs and talk about the fellowship and enjoy the message but doesn't obey? James called him self-deceived. Jesus called him a fool. Not me, Jesus. Jesus called him a fool. James said if you hear the Word of God and you don't do the Word of God you are self-deceived and your faith is dead faith. Put down James chapter 2 verses 14 through 20, "What does it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith and have not works. Can faith save him?" The Greek is, "can that faith save him?" "If a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food and one of you say unto them, 'Depart in peace, be warmed and filled,' notwithstanding you give them not those things which are needful to the body, what doth it profit?" That is, it's just empty words. "Even so, in the same way, faith, if it hath not works is dead, being alone." Now you're saved by faith alone, but the faith that saves is never alone. The faith that saves is never alone. It's always accompanied by works. James goes on with this challenge, "Yea, a man may say, 'Thou hast faith and I have works. Show me thy faith without thy works, I will show thee my faith by my works.' Thou believest there is one God, thou doest well; the devils also believe and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead."

Did you know that the devil is more orthodox than some preachers? I mean, the devil at least knows the holiness of Jesus Christ. I was reading over there in Luke chapter 4 verse 34 where the demons cringed at Jesus and they said, "We know who you are, the Holy One of God," and they trembled. I would to God that some so-called theologians today would tremble at the same thing. And there are people today who



have no more faith than the devil. They have an intellectual faith, but they do not live by their faith and he says in James chapter 2 verse 26, that, "The body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." You must have the Word, you must hear the Word, you must heed the Word. What good is a body of truth without the life of the Spirit? You might do an autopsy on your faith and see if it's the real faith.

I was reading something humorous in the Massachusetts Bar Association lawyer's journal. They gave a list of questions that lawyers literally asked in court and their answers during trials. Here's the one that I thought was the classic. Question, now this is a lawyer talking to a doctor. Question: "Doctor, before you performed the autopsy, did you check for a pulse?" Answer: "No." Question: "Did you check for blood pressure?" Answer: "No." Question: "Did you check for breathing?" Answer: "No." Question: "Then it is possible that the patient was alive when you began the autopsy." Answer: "No." Question: "How can you be sure, doctor?" Answer: "Because his brain was sitting on my desk in a jar." Question: "But couldn't the patient have still been alive nevertheless?" Answer: "It is possible that he could have been alive and practicing law somewhere." As the body without the brain is dead, faith without works is dead. What James is saying is that if you have faith, it's going to show in your works. And so here's the very first thing, the surety of rock-solid faith is this, that you must have, you must hear, you must heed the Word of God. If not, the time's going to come when the bottom is going to fall out.

Now here's the second thing. I want you to see not only the surety of rock-solid faith, but I want you to see **the stability of rock-solid faith**. Now you can expect storms, you can expect storms whether you're saved or lost. In Matthew 7, verses 25 and 27, both of these verses tell us that the storm beat upon both houses. And notice how the Lord, the master teacher, described the storms. Rain fell, that's pressure from above. And then the Lord said the floods came, that's pressure from beneath. And then Jesus said and the winds blew, that's pressure from all around. And we're going to find this, pressure from above and pressure from beneath and pressure from all around. And your faith is going to be tested. And the faith that cannot be tested is the faith that cannot be trusted. And your faith is not going to be tested in the sunshine, your faith is going to be tested in the storm and the test of your faith is not popularity, it is not profession, the test of your faith is your stability in the storm.

Now I've talked to you about the surety of rock-solid faith, now I'm talking to you about the stability of rock-solid faith. If you were to read the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews, the eleventh chapter of the book of Hebrews was written to people who were about to throw in the towel, they were about to abandon the faith because of all of the great persecution that was coming upon the church. And so the writer of the book of Hebrews tells about the exciting victories of faith and how all of those people, how Daniel in the lions' den and all of these others, Moses at the Red Sea and all of these things, how Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were taken out of the fiery furnace and we all love those exciting victories of faith. I love those. But then he goes on at the end of the eleventh chapter of Hebrews to talk about the enduring virtues of faith. And he says in Hebrews 11:37, "And others were stoned, some were sawn asunder, some endured a strange trial of affliction," and all of these, they did that by faith. You see, faith doesn't mean that you're not going to have a storm. Remember the story that Jesus told, please don't forget it. The storms beat upon both houses.

Now come up close and I'm going to tell you something. If you get your theology from circumstances, you're going to come to the conclusion that God doesn't love you. If you get your theology from circumstances, sooner or later when the storm comes you're going to get the idea that God doesn't love



you. John 11 verse 5, the Bible says, "Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus." And then John 11 verse 14, "Then Jesus said unto them plainly, 'Lazarus is dead.'" Mary and Martha said, "Oh, God, heal Lazarus." The Bible said He loved them. But then later on in John 11:15, He said, "Lazarus is dead," and if you'll read it says, "Lazarus is dead and I'm glad." If you get your theology from circumstances, you're going to come from the conclusion that God does not love you. Difficulty does not mean that God has abandoned you. If you built a house and the storms come, that does not mean that God has abandoned you. Habakkuk 3, we may need this soon, Habakkuk 3 verses 17 and 18, "Although the fig tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be on the vine, though the olive shall fail and the fields shall yield no meat, the flocks shall be cut off from the fold and there shall be no herd in the stalls, yet will I rejoice in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation." You know what faith is? Faith is not receiving from God the things you want, it is accepting from God the things He gives. The winds, the rains, the floods beat upon both houses.

Now I've talked to you about the surety of rock-solid faith, I've talked about the stability of rock-solid faith, let's talk about **the security of it**. Look in Matthew 7 verse 25 if you will, "And the rains descended and the floods came and the winds blew and beat upon that house and it fell not, for it was built, it was founded upon a rock." Why do people cave in, I'll tell you why they cave in; they have nothing to stand on. The bottom falls out. They're all house but they're no foundation. They have profession without possession. Look in verse 22 of this chapter, "Many will say unto Me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, have I not prophesied in Thy name and in Thy name cast out devils and in Thy name done many wonderful works?' And then will I profess unto them, 'Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity, I never knew you.'" They had no foundation. We see this often. Somebody will say, "Pastor, they don't come anymore, they were one of our finest families, what happened to them?" First John 2:19, "They went out from us but they were not of us, for if they had been of us they no doubt would've continued with us, but they went out that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us." I'm telling you, when the doctor's report came, when the job was gone, when the child died, when calamity came, the bottom fell out, they threw in the towel, and they quit. The winds, the rains, and the storms were too much for them.

Now, everybody here looks so similar. Had you examined Simon Peter and Judas and somebody would say to you, "Which of these two apostles would be most likely to succeed?" I will promise you, you would've said Judas, you would've said Judas. Judas was the treasurer. Who do we make the treasurer? The person that we trust the most. Who was it that kept on putting his foot in his mouth? Who was it that was blustering and always so arrogant and self-satisfied in a way and self-reliant? Wasn't it Peter? Sure it was. And if you and I had examined the lives of these two, outwardly, their houses looked both the same, and both of these men went through a storm. The storm came to old Judas, it was fear and greed, selfish aggrandizement, all of these things came to him. There was the storm of his betrayal of Jesus, there was the storm of his remorse and guilt, and he finally fills a suicide's grave. The bottom just fell out, just fell out.

And then there was Simon Peter. The storm came to Simon Peter too, because Jesus said in Luke 22 verses 31 and 32, "Simon, Satan has desired you, that he might sift you as wheat, but Simon I prayed for you, I prayed that your faith fail not." Notice this, Jesus knew, Jesus knew that Peter had faith. Some people have the idea that Judas lost his salvation. Friend, Judas never was saved. Jesus said in John 6:70, "Have I not chosen you twelve and one of you is a devil?" And then the Bible says in John 6 verse 64, Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not. Jesus didn't say, Oops, I made a mistake. It was all a part of the plan of Jesus, but He knew, He knew that Judas had no faith. He realized that Simon Peter was



weak and stumbling and bumbling, failure, foible, fear, he had it all. But he also had faith.

You see, there came a day when Jesus had had these disciples in His seminary and now comes the finals. In Matthew chapter 16 verses 13 through 18, He brings them to Caesarea Philippi and He asks them, "I want to ask you a theological question. Who do people say that I am?" They say, "Well, some say you're Elijah, some say you're John the Baptist and some say you're one of the prophets." He says, "Peter, who do you say I am?" Boy, I love him for this. Peter said, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," and Jesus said, "And blessed are you, Simon Barjona, flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto you," you didn't just figure it out. My Father revealed it to you. And then Jesus said, "Upon this rock I'll build my church." And old Peter had a rock to stand on, friend. He had something. I'll tell you, the storms came to Peter too. We laugh and make fun of Peter, but I wonder what you'd have done if you faced what Peter faced that time when they were about to nail the darling Son of God upon the cross. Friend, it was terrible and I'm telling you, he went through the very vortex of a cyclone, a storm, and the rain fell on him and the floods of Hell rose against him, and the winds of doubt and despair were all around him. Old Peter's house was going just like this, rocking, the shingles perhaps coming off the roof, the window panes cracking, the shutters flapping, but he was on a rock. He was the same one who became the flaming apostle of Pentecost. What's the difference between Judas and Peter? I'll tell you the difference, the foundation. That's the difference.

Friend, I'm telling you from my heart, storms come to everybody. Outwardly we look all alike, but if you want to see the difference, you've got to look beneath the surface to the foundation. And I beg you in the name of Jesus to make certain that you have rock-solid faith. Number one, that you have the Word of God, beware of false prophets. Number two, that you hear the Word of God, don't let it just blow past you. Number three, that you heed the Word of God, "He that hath My sayings and doeth them," Jesus said, "he it is that loveth Me." "If a man be a hearer of the Word and not a doer, only a hearer, hearer only, he deceives his own heart."

Would you bow your heads in prayer? Heads are bowed and eyes are closed. Do you know why Jesus brought you here today? That you might have the Word of God. Do you know why He brought you here today? That you might hear the Word of God. Do you know why He brought you here today? Don't check me out, now, listen, don't move around, listen to me. Why did He bring you here today? To have the Word, to hear the Word, and to heed the Word. You're not saved by listening to sermons. "Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine and doeth them is the man that builds his house upon a rock." I want you right now to do the most wonderful thing that you can do and that is to give your heart to Jesus Christ. "Adrian Rogers, would Jesus save me today?" I promise you on the authority of the Word of God He will save you if you trust Him. The Bible says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." And right where you are, in that seat this morning, this moment, you can pass from death unto life.

Would you pray this prayer with me? Pray it silently but fervently, "Dear God, I know that You love me and I know that You want to save me. Jesus, You died to save me, You promised to save me if I would trust You. I do trust in You. I turn from my sin and I turn from myself, I turn from my self-effort. I give You my heart right now. I receive You this moment into my life as my Lord and Savior. Forgive my sin, cleanse me, come into my heart, make me Your child. I receive You by faith this moment. You are now my Lord and my master. Help me never to be ashamed of You. In Your name I pray, Amen."



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