

The Two Foundations

Matthew 7.24-27

Last week we began looking at the stories Jesus told to illustrate truths He was teaching. These stories (parables) were given in the context of Jesus' coming kingdom. To experience 'kingdom life,' Jesus taught us to build our lives on the foundation of His words.

What Does It Mean to "enter the kingdom of heaven"?

- What does it take to "enter the kingdom of heaven"? (Mt. 5.20ff)
- The 'narrow way,' and false prophets (Mt. 7.13-20)
- Who will "enter the kingdom of heaven"? (Mt. 7.21-23)
- To 'enter the kingdom' meant to 'live the kingdom life'!

The Wise Man Builds His House on the Rock" (24-25)

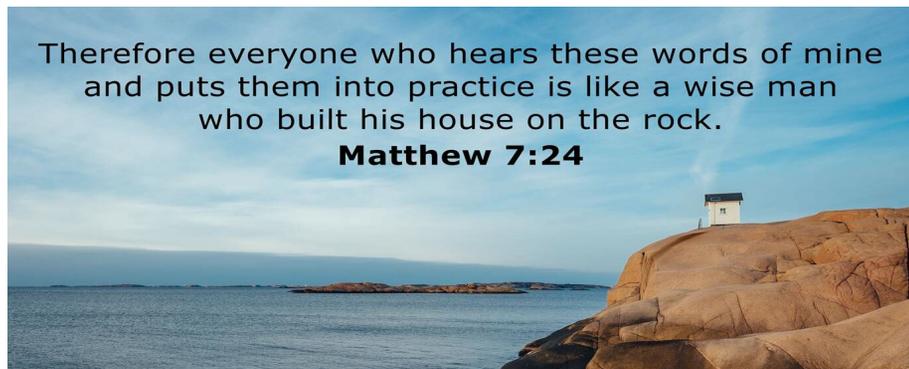
- He 'hears Jesus' words and acts on them.'
- When 'the storms' come, 'his house' does not fall.

The Foolish Man Builds His House on the Sand (26-27)

- He 'hears Jesus' words and *does not* act on them.'
- When 'the storms' come, 'his house' has a great fall.

Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.

Matthew 7:24



1. Matthew 7.24-27 comes at the conclusion of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5-7); it is a 'closing admonition' Jesus uses to exhort His hearers to heed what He has said. It is important, therefore, for us to know what He has said! Read the "body" of the sermon, from Matt. 4.17-7.12. How would you generally characterize what Jesus is saying? What situations in people's lives does He address? What kind of person is He directing His teaching to? What is the goal of His instruction?
2. The people to whom Jesus is speaking are clearly aware of the Old Testament Law, and biblical teaching. They are involved in good works (like feeding the poor), they fast and pray, and they have a tendency to pass judgment on the spiritual lives of others (see Mt. 7.1-5)! Careful now: What group or kind of people do you think Jesus would address this sermon to if He was preaching it today?
3. The scribes and Pharisees were the 'gold standard' for religious piety in Jesus' day, but Jesus said that unless his listeners were more righteous than them, they wouldn't enter the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 5.20). From what Jesus said about specific ethical issues, like murder (5.21-22), adultery (5.27-28), divorce (5.31-32), making oaths (5.33-37), getting revenge (5.38-42), love for others (5.43-47), and spiritual activities like benevolence (6.2-4), prayer (6.5-7), and fasting (6.16-18), what was He emphasizing?
4. Money is often a barometer of our spiritual lives, and Jesus saw it that way, too. What specific truths does He lay out in Matt. 6.19-34? What does it mean to "seek first His kingdom" (v33)?
5. Those who want to experience the 'kingdom kind of life' now, and be rewarded in the kingdom to come, need to enter by the 'narrow gate' (7.13-14) and build their 'house' on the 'rock' by obeying Jesus' teaching (7.24-27). What two threats to their spiritual lives does Jesus identify in 7.15-20, and 7.21-23, respectively? Have you faced these threats in your life? How did you respond to them?