

THE TWO BUILDERS AND THEIR HOUSES (Mt. 7:21-27)

That is how Spurgeon entitled his sermon on this passage, - *The Two Builders and Their Houses*. We often use this parable to preach the Gospel, and of course, it is right and proper to use to that end. It can also be used as a *reminder* to God's people. During his sermon Spurgeon encouraged the believers by reminding them never to overlook their sin for a true sense of sin gives a deeper understanding of what the Lord has saved us from. Next, he told his listeners to seek for real faith for "Many things which men call faith are not the precious faith of God's elect. Sincere trust in Jesus Christ is counterfeited in a thousand ways, and often imitated so accurately that only by rigid self-examination shall you discover the cheat. ... You must lie flat upon Christ, the Rock; you must depend entirely upon Him, all your hope and all your trust must be in Him. If you believe with the heart, and not nominally, you are safe, but not otherwise. You must have true repentance and real faith, or you are foolish builders".

Let's look at these two famous individuals who illustrate the need to be certain of strong shelter in the storms of life. Firstly, they both **built** ...

Both men engaged in the same activity, and to a considerable degree achieved the same design. Neither man would have initially embarked on this project lightly. They would have 'calculated the figures', arranged for each aspect of the work to be carried out, made sure they had sufficient collateral, etc. This was no mere whim for either of them ... and both men would have had a good degree of understanding and knowledge as to the work that lay before them.

They were also both equally committed to building a *new* house, - not renovating an old building, but constructing a new. They were both aware of the climate they lived in and the requirements to respond to the elements at their most ferocious, - the hottest summers and the coldest winters. They both required secure shelter, and they had both weighed up the advantages of having the right kind of house. There is no indication the tools and materials were difficult to acquire. Everything was available for the work to progress.

Through this parable Jesus was warning the people to *properly* prepare in this life for the next. This parable illustrates how both these men **built**, but only one of their buildings withstood the test.

There is no point constructing a building and merely *hoping* it will stand, for we need to be *sure*. ... Salvation is sure. Again, Spurgeon preached (1870), "Want of depth, want of sincerity, want of reality in religion, - this is the want of our

times. Want of an eye to God in religion, lack of sincere dealing with one's own soul, neglect of using the lancet with our hearts, neglect of the search warrant which God gives out against sin, carelessness concerning living upon Christ; much reading about him, much talking about him, but too little feeding upon his flesh, and drinking of his blood, - these are the causes of tottering professions and baseless hopes."

We need to be sure we are saved. We need to know that where we are standing is safe and secure before the winds and the storms approach. When we see the dark clouds beginning to form, or when we see them coming in from the distance, we know it's time to bring the washing in, to close the windows, and to remain inside ... that we are sheltered safe from what's coming, as the hymn says, "I'm sheltered in the arms of God".

In this parable, Jesus was referring to the day of judgment. It will be a terrible, frightening, dreadful day when there will be those who come to Him, who had built their religion according to their own suppositions, and they will say, "Lord, we have come to receive from You what we reckon we are owed and what we reckon we have worked for. ... We have performed some amazing works and the people we gathered around us have marvelled. ... so, here we are, let us enter!" ... They were engaged in *building*, but what were they *building*? They had coagulated all their religious activities, and that was what they were depending upon for acceptance into God's Heaven. The fact they had to explain themselves, - who they were, - indicates they only had a passing knowledge of the Saviour ... they neither truly knew Him, and He did not know them.

Jesus warned, [Mt. 7:23](#) And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity ... "You have been using the wrong bricks and cementing them together with the wrong mortar. Your dimensions are flawed. Your foundations are unsteady. Your walls are weak. Your roof is unstable. Your building will collapse". ... Such was the dilemma awaiting the foolish builder who built according to his own specifications. ... He was only concerned with what was *above* the ground ... that others could see, but he had no grasp of the necessity for a firm foundation.

And while the two builders are alike in many ways, they are 'poles apart' in character and in the quality of their work for Jesus judges one as wise, and the other as foolish. One is superficial, the other is substantial. The wise man's work began where others could not see it ... The foolish man's building was all above

the ground, in ‘full glare’, where he wanted it to be admired ... but there was nothing attaching it to the foundation-rock!

Both these men **built** under the same climate conditions, knowing the storm was on its way. When they both finished though, what happened? Both men **built** ... and both men had to **battle!** ... They both were confronted with the same elements. The winds and floods blasted (‘slammed’) against both houses. Both were battered with equal ferocity. The rain pounded them as the storm passed over. We could imagine both men being anxious, but one of them was more confident and composed than the other. One of them had the inner assurance his building would continue standing. The other had *no* assurance, and his fears were realised when it was too late ... It was too late to wish he had dug suitable and credible foundations, to wish he had been more attentive to the fundamental specifications. It was too late to confess he never should have built his home upon shifting sands ... and being a builder, he *must* have known!

But the other man who built upon the rock, when the rains came crashing down, and the floods came rising up, and the winds blew ferociously, his house remained standing long after the storm had passed.

I wonder if, previously, the foolish man lay in bed at night and sometimes heard creaking noises which ought to have warned him all was not as it should be. I wonder if it concerned him or if he simply turned over and went back to sleep. ... That’s what a foolish man would do. “I’ll sort it out later. I’ll check it out some other time”. And what started out looking beautiful began to take a different shape than was intended.

Our faith really matters when we know the storms of life are on their way. ... The hymn quoted earlier has a verse which says, “Soon I shall hear the call from Heaven’s portals, ‘Come home, My child, it’s the last mile you have trod’. I’ll fall asleep and wake up in God’s new Heaven, Forever sheltered in the arms of God”. ... It really matters we are certain when the storms of life come that, as Moses said, *Deut. 33:27* The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. ... The foolish man’s house would have been full of beautiful ornaments and trophies celebrating his achievements, and he would have had his pictures on every wall ... but what good were they to him when the storm brought them all down round him!

The other man’s house was built on *the rock* ... Another hymn writer has written, “On Christ the solid Rock I stand, All other ground is sinking sand”.

... For as long as we are in this world, we have to contend with its ‘storms’ ... and the longer we are on life’s sea, the more we shall be battered. We, - Christians, - are not immune to what everyone else has to endure. The winds ‘slam against’ the saved as much as the unsaved. In fact, notice how the winds and the rains and the floods came upon the wise man’s house first, as Peter reminds us, *I Peter 4:17* judgment must begin at the house of God ... ¹⁸ And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? ... The wise man made every precaution and that was how he was saved. ... It would have taken him longer building his house because he would have exercised greater judgment and competency ... but it paid off ... “Sometimes the day seems long, our trials hard to bear; we’re tempted to complain, to murmur and despair ... It will be worth it all when we see Jesus. Life’s trials will seem so small when we see Christ”.

... They both **built**, they both **battled**, and they both **BORE** the consequences of their labours. ... How do you think the foolish man would have fared with his insurance company? ... The first question the insurance company would have explored was, were the foundations secure? And the moment they discovered the man had built his house upon sand, that would have been the moment the insurance company told him there was nothing they could do ... he was on his own! ... That is how Jesus spoke to these people who came to him, relying on their efforts. Yes, they knew *about* Him, and yet, they were strangers *to* Him. He sent them away, - you’re on your own, He said, for I don’t know you!

You want to be certain of where you stand and where you are in these uncertain times? ... There is no foundation so sure and steadfast as the Lord Jesus Christ,

Oh, safe to the Rock that is higher than I,
My soul in its conflicts and sorrows would fly ...
Thou blest Rock of Ages, I’m hiding in Thee.

That is the hope of every born-again believer. You will not crumble, no matter how destructive the storm. The hymn writer pitched it perfectly,

Abide with me! Fast falls the eventide;
The darkness thickens. Lord with me abide.

Come not in terrors, As the King of kings,
But kind and good, With healing in Thy wings,
Tears for all woes, A heart for every plea,
Come, Friend of sinners, And abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy cross Before my closing eyes;
 Shine through the gloom, And point me to the skies;
 Heaven's morning breaks, And earth's vain shadows flee:
 In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me!

What a Friend we have in Jesus, All our sins and griefs to bear! ...
 Soon in glory bright unclouded There will be no need for prayer
 Rapture, praise and endless worship Will be our sweet portion there.

Many of us learned the chorus as children ...

The wise man built his house upon the Rock, ...
 And the rains came tumbling down.
 The rains came down and the floods came up, ...
 But the house on the Rock stood firm.

The foolish man built his house upon the sand, ...
 And the rains came tumbling down.
 The rains came down and the floods came up, ...
 And the house on the sand fell flat.

So build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ,
 So build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ,
 So build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ,
 And the blessings will come down.
 The blessings come down as your prayers go up,
 The blessings come down as your prayers go up,
 The blessings come down as your prayers go up,
 So build your life on the Lord Jesus Christ.