

Matthew 7.24-29
The Builder
WRCoB 9.29.24

A carpenter worked for a local contractor.

There was quality in his workmanship.

Whenever they had a particularly nice house to build
He would be the one assigned to do the work.

You can drive through the Richmond area
And see the nice houses he built.

But he was getting older.

It was getting harder every morning
To get out of bed.

Climbing around setting trusses on a 2-story house
Was just getting too tough for him.

It was time to retire.

He told his employer of his plans.

He'd miss the trade he loved.

But he was feeling the effects
Of years of manual labor.

His employer was sorry to see him go.

He was the best carpenter they ever had.

His employer sat across the desk
Look at him closely and asked.

“Can I get you to build just one more house?”

The carpenter sat there, a bit embarrassed
Thought awhile, and reluctantly agreed.

But you could tell his heart wasn't in it.

Once he made his decision, he was done!

Now he found himself building a house
He didn't want to build.

Uncharacteristically
He became sloppy and uncaring
Cut corners where he could.

He arrived late and left early.

Deadlines weren't met and problems were many.

It was an unfortunate way to end his career.

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Finally, the house was completed.

The contractor came to inspect the house.

He noted the carpenter's lack of workmanship.

When they returned to the front door
The employer turned around to the carpenter
And handed the house keys to him.

“This is your house,” he said, “my retirement gift to you.”

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If only he knew.

Now he owned a home he built

A home he'd never choose to live in!

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Matthew 7:24 CEB

²⁴ “Everybody who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise builder who built a house on bedrock.

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The Scripture Lesson for today

Are the closing words

Of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount.

From the beginning of Matthew 5 through chapter 7

Jesus teaches the essence of Christian discipleship.

Read it through, carefully and deliberately.

For every serious follower of Jesus

Should have a basic understanding

Of what Jesus wants out of our lives.

Jesus closes his sermon with a parable.

The parable is about two builders.

Each chose a different foundation for their home



One, wise and discerning, builds on solid rock.

While the other, foolish and careless builds on sand.

The parable, of course, is a metaphor

Of the choices we make in building our own lives.

Digging a little deeper we see that

The wise builder represents a person whose life

Is built on the foundation of Jesus' teachings

Most specifically here in the SOM.

When the storms of life inevitably come

His/her house stands strong

Because it was built on a foundation

That withstands the fiercest of winds and floods.

His foundation was built
On Jesus' words that were put into practice.

The foolish builder, on the other hand, represents
A life that follows the path of least resistance.



A life that prioritizes fleeting desires and whims
Paying little heed to God's guidance.

His house is not equipped to handle the storms of life.

When the wind starts to blow
And the rains come in buckets
His house collapses
Leaving him at the mercy of the storm.

Again, the parable is quite simply
A metaphor speaking directly
To the choices we make in life.

Life's decisions have an accumulative effect.

It is attributed to Albert Camus this quote

Life is a sum of all your choices.

At times, we build our lives in haphazard fashion.

Every thought, every action
Is like a 2x4 we use for our house.

Every choice, whether good or bad
Every desire, every deed

Is like a window, doorframe, or floor joist
Whether good or bad
Properly or improperly placed.

And little by little, our house is being built
With little thought as to its final building.

Then in shock we look at the life we built
Wondering, "Is this the best I could have done?"

It comes down to the question:

Are we building our house with durable building materials made up of the ways of Jesus?

Or are we building our houses with the cheap materials of selfish ambition and worldly desires?

The way we build our house will become apparent
As time moves onward.

We are all building houses in life.

Not our actual dwelling places of course
But who we are as people.

The choices we make define who we become.

The way we live, our relationships, choices
The way we respond when tough times come.
All of that becomes the house we live in.

Richard S. Halverson, Presbyterian minister
And former U.S. Senate Chaplain
Creates an image of how we might look like
After a life of building your house.

*You're going to meet an old man or woman someday
down the road—ten, thirty, fifty years from now—waiting
there for you. You'll be catching up with him or her.
What kind of an old person will you meet?*

*That person may be a seasoned, soft, gracious
person—a gentle man or woman who has grown old
gracefully, surrounded by hosts of friends, friends who
call them blessed because of what their life has meant
to them.*

*Or the person may be a bitter, disillusioned, dried-up old
buzzard without a good word for anyone—sour, friendless,
and alone.*

*That person will be you. They'll be the composite of
everything you do, say, and think—today and tomorrow.*

And let me say, here's the truth of it all..

By the choices we make when building our earthly lives
Has eternal significances

For in the final analysis
We are also building our spiritual lives.

There is an eternal quality to everything we do
And in the way our earthly houses are built.

Because as we build our houses here on earth
Our eternal homes are being built.

And as our earthly homes decay and grow old
Our spiritual homes built on Jesus remain rock solid
Extending beyond this life.

Consider, that every day as we lay a brick
On the wall of our earthly home

Concurrently, a brick is laid
On the wall of our eternal home.

As we hammer a nail here on earth
A nail is hammered in heaven.

Everything we build on earth
Mirrors the eternal dwelling awaiting us.

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Some of us might be inclined to think

“Oh well, it’s too late for me.”

“I’ve made too many mistakes
My house is built flippantly without any thought
Using cheap, flimsy materials.

My foundation is cracking and settling in.”

Yet, there is hope, always hope
For our God is a God of second chances

C. S. Lewis, in his book, *Mere Christianity*
Speaks of God as a builder
Who is constantly rebuilding our lives.

He writes,

Imagine yourself as a living house. God comes in to rebuild that house. At first, perhaps, you can understand what he is doing. He is getting the drains right and stopping the leaks in the roof and so on; you knew that these jobs needed doing and so you are not surprised.

But presently he starts knocking the house about in a way that hurts abominably and does not seem to make any sense. What on earth is he up to?

The explanation is that he is building quite a different house from the one you thought of—throwing out a new wing here, putting in an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards.

You thought you were being made into a decent little cottage: but he is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it himself.

Even if our lives have been built on shaky ground.

God's grace can still be the architecture in our life
Remaking, transforming and building our lives
More and more into the likeness of Jesus.

And so, in conclusion
Let Jesus be the architect of your life.

And let the Sermon on the Mount be the blueprints
For building your earthly and spiritual homes.

For he is the rock and foundation of our salvation.

Let us, by the grace of God build our lives
On the foundation of Jesus

Let his words be our compass
His Spirit our guide
And his love the mortar
That binds it all together

Then our houses may stand the test of time
Here, and in our eternal home.

Sisters and brethren
Let us build wisely
It's the only house we'll ever truly live in.