

Sunday, November 15, 2009

Matthew 7.24-29
The Builder
SWCOB 11.15.09

Once upon a time,
There was a carpenter who worked for a general contractor.

He was known for his good workmanship.

Whenever the contractor had a particularly nice house to build,
He would always assign this carpenter,
To do the work.

You can drive through the Waterloo area,
And point out the nice houses this carpenter built.

But he was getting old,
And it was harder and harder for him
To get out of bed in the morning.

He knew it was time to retire.

He told his employer of his plans to retire,
To leave the trade that he loved.

He told him he wanted to live out his life,
In more leisurely ways,
With his wife, kids, and grandkids.

Yea, he would miss his paycheck,
The camaraderie with his fellow workers,
He would miss the deep sense of satisfaction,
He had in plying his trade.

But he was getting old,
Feeling the effects of his many years of manual labor,
And he just needed to retire.
Of course his employer was sorry to see him go.

He was a skilled and loyal worker,
And was one of the best carpenters he had ever known.

His employer sat across the desk from him,

Look at him closely,
And asked the carpenter a question;

“Would you be willing to build one more house for me?”

The carpenter sat there, looked across the desk to his employer,
Thought for a bit,
And then reluctantly agreed.

But it was easy to see that his heart wasn't in it.

And so as he started to build this new house,
You could tell the life was sucked right out of him.

Once he had decided to retire,
He just wanted out,
And now he found himself building a house,
He didn't want to build.

He resorted to shoddy workmanship.

He became sloppy and uncaring,
Cut corners wherever he could.

He would arrive late to the worksite in the morning,
Take extra long for lunch,
And often leave before the day was done.

It was truly an unfortunate way to end his career.

Deadlines weren't met and problems were many.

Finally, the house was completed,
And the contractor came to give his inspection of the house.

The contractor walked around the perimeter of the house,
And throughout the interior.

He noted the workmanship.

When they returned to the front door,
The contractor turned around
And handed the front door key to the carpenter.

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

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What a shock! What a shame!
If only he had known he was building his own house!

If only he knew it was for him,
Ohhhhh, he would have built it all so differently!

Now he owned a home that he was none too proud of,
A home he never would have chosen to live in!

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The spiritual house we build here on earth,
Will be the heavenly home we live in for eternity.

Build it wisely.

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We often build our spiritual lives in a haphazard fashion.

Every thought, every action,
Is like a 2x4,
In our spiritual house.

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

Is like a window, doorframe, or floor joist,
Well, or badly placed.

Little by little we build this house,
With little thought to how it is being built,

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

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We have come to the end of our sermon series,
On the Sermon on the Mount.

Jesus closes his sermon with these words:

**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.**

**The rain came down,
The streams rose,
And the winds blew and beat against that house;**

**Yet it did not fall,
Because it had its foundation on the rock.**

**But everyone who hears these words of mine,
And does not put them into practice,
Is like the foolish man who built his house on sand.**

**The rain came down, the streams rose,
And the winds blew and beat against that house,
And it fell with a great crash.**

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It is clear that Jesus did not intend,
For his words simply to be heard!

It is clear that Jesus did not intend,
For his followers simply to believe!

It is clear that Jesus intended,
His disciples to hear his words,
And believe, in such a way,

As to be completely transformed by them!

And indeed, the text says,
**When Jesus had finished saying these things,
The crowds were amazed at his teaching,
Because he taught as one who had authority . . .**

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The key to this passage,
The key to his whole sermon,

In fact, the key to the whole Gospel message is right here;
**Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine,
And puts them into practice**

There are three parts to the Christian faith,
Hearing, believing, and doing.

Our faith is like this Swanson speed square.

The triangle is made up of,
Three equally important angles.

These are the angles of our faith.

Here is HEARING,
And here is BELIEVING,
And here is DOING.

Our faith must rest equally on each of these three components.

Hearing, we must hear the Word of God,
We must diligently read the Bible,
We must hear the words of Jesus,

We must seek to understand,
With our minds,
With our hearts,
And with our souls,
To the truths found in Scripture.

We must then allow the Holy Spirit to convict us of the truths.

And then we must believe with our whole being,
That Jesus is the Authority in our lives,
And the Authority over all of Creation.

And then, we are to move beyond,
The hearing of words and belief in him who said them,

We must put them into practice.

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When you come to Jesus,
And you confess him Lord and Savior,

Heaven's doors open,
And Jesus gives you the keys to your spiritual house.

Jesus is now the architect of your life.

The Bible is your blueprint.

He has designed and drawn up plans,
And through the Holy Spirit,
He has given you all the tools,
Necessary to build your spiritual home.

You are the carpenter of your spiritual home.

It is up to you,
To build it according to His design.

Think about your house.

We all have a house to build.

And as we build our spiritual house here on earth,
Our spiritual home is being built in heaven.

This should be our ultimate concern.

For what we build on earth,
Will be our dwelling place for all of eternity.

Many never pay any attention to this:
It is furthest from their thoughts.

They build their earthly homes,
Without any thought about their spiritual homes.

Each day as you lay the block on your spiritual home,
A block is being laid in heaven.

Each day as you hammer a nail here on earth,
A nail is hammered in heaven.

Each day as you place a board, or erect a wall,
The same is done in heaven.

And everyday we build,
Is one day closer to completion.

So when our spiritual house is finally built on earth,
When the life we've created is finally finished,
We will move beyond this life,
Into the very spiritual house that we've built.
Build it wisely,
It is the only house you'll live in.

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Jesus says,
**Everyone who hears these words of mine,
And puts them into practice . . .**

Which words?

Everything that he has said in the Sermon on the Mount!

We must put into practice the words that Jesus spoke,
When he was addressing the crowds,
Preaching his Sermon on the Mount.

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How are we to put his words into practice?

How are we to build our spiritual homes?
What tools should we use?

We use the tools of the fruits of the Spirit,
As found in Galatians 5.22-23;

We build our spiritual homes with the tools of,
Love, joy, and peace,
Patience, kindness, and goodness,
Faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

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Maybe the Spirit is nudging you to greater faith.

Maybe Jesus is showing you opportunities,
To build on your faith.

Maybe he has given you the tools,
And you haven't used them yet.

Now is the time to begin!
Now is the time to build for Jesus Christ!

Now is the time to open the blueprints,
And begin the work of building your spiritual home.

It doesn't matter that you've already been baptized!

It doesn't matter you've attended church all your life.

It doesn't matter that you've been raised in a Christian home.

It doesn't matter that you've made a mess,
Out of the spiritual house you've been building.

It doesn't even matter that the house you been building,
Is about ready to collapse under its own weight.

What does matter, right here and now, is that you start.

Build your spiritual house on the rock of salvation!

What does matter is that you hear His word,
Believe it to be true,
And put it into practice!

What does matter is that you live your life,
According to Jesus Christ,
As found here in the Word of God!

Now at this very moment!

Build on the foundation of Jesus Christ.
Make a clear and visible commitment to him.

Open your hearts and minds to his love and grace.

Commit yourself to him above all others,

Confess with your lips, and your hearts,
And in your actions,
That Jesus is the architect of your life!

It is Jesus that will help you build your spiritual home!

It is Jesus that will give you the tools
Necessary to build your house.

It is on the rock of Jesus,
Where your home will stand!

And it will resist the heaviest of rains,
And the fiercest of storms,
And it will not be shaken!

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Do not let this opportunity go by!

Take this moment and give your life to Jesus.

Recommit your life to Him this very minute.

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You are the carpenter of your life,
Jesus is the architect,
The Bible is the blueprint,

How are you going to build your house?