

Be the Wise

Matthew 7:24-27 New American Standard Bible

“Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine, and acts on them, will **be like a wise man** who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of Mine, and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ And the rain fell and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and its collapse was great.”

Introduction

"He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."--Jim Elliott

This morning we are going to think about “fools.” Not in the worldly sense, but in God’s eyes. We will listen to Jesus what it means to be foolish and wise in God’s sight. Some folks who are smart in the worldly sense yet can be a fool before God. I’d rather be wise in the sight of God though I may be a fool in the world. Wouldn’t you? That’s what we will think about this morning.

Content

Biblical Understanding of Fool

God’s Word often talks about fools and foolishness. E.g. Psalm 14:1: *The fool has said in his heart, “There is no God.”* In fact, God repeatedly commands us not to be a fool in His sight.

‘Fool,’ ‘Foolish,’ and ‘Foolishness’ appear 214 times in the Bible (New American Standard Bible): 168 times in the Old Testament (80% of the time). 46 times in the New Testament (20% of the time).

The Book of Proverbs stands out among all other books in the Bible. It most talks about fool and foolishness--- 83 times. The half of the Old Testament references! One third of all entries in the Bible. For instance, Proverbs 1:7: *Fools despise wisdom and instruction* (of the Lord, kc). Proverbs 10:18: *One who spreads slander is a fool.* Proverbs 28:26: *One who trusts in his own heart is a fool.* Proverbs 29:11: *A fool always loses his temper.*

God's Word clearly lays out the meaning of fool in the context of our relationship with God: *Such is a fool who doesn't keep God's commandments, who doesn't know God, who doesn't believe in God, who doesn't fear the Lord, and who relies on own wisdom.* Don't be one of them, God commands.

Jesus' own definition of fool

In today's text, Jesus talks about 'a believing fool.' Who is the believing fool? A *believer who hears His words but doesn't keep His commands* (v. 24, 26). I may hear Jesus' words until my ears are hurt yet if I don't act on the words in my life, then I am a fool, Jesus says. If we only hear Jesus' words with no action, we will suffer the following three tragedies of a believing fool. I hope and pray that none of us become a fool in God's sight.

Three tragedies of a believing fool: unpreparedness, ignorance, self-deception

1. *Unpreparedness for life's crooks and eternal life.* In today's story, we see two believers. They both believe in Jesus. Both hear Jesus' words. Yet, one keeps His words. The other doesn't. One is wise and the other is foolish. In God's eyes.

Like a house is built on a foundation to stand on, their lives are built over the years on a foundation they believe essential in their lives. The foundation can be anything including God's Word, money, fame, power, status, and so forth. When life's crises fall upon them and test each one's character and their lives, the true color of two lives will appear and it will determine who's the fool and who's the wise.

The fool's life will totally collapse in times of adversity because it was standing on the wrong foundation such as sand that is not reliable. What is the right foundation? The rock, Jesus says, that is, keeping His words. By not keeping His commands, the fool puts his own life in jeopardy.

You may spend your entire life attending church services, serve on committees, teach Sunday school, sing in the choir, give offerings every week, preach a sermon, or even do wonders and signs in the name of Jesus, yet, still can be a fool if you don't do what Jesus says. E.g. *Forgive others. Love your enemies.* Keep in mind that not doing God's commands will cost your eternal life.

Check this out in Matthew 7:21-23: ²¹ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. ²² Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' ²³ And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; leave Me, you who practice lawlessness.'

Those who don't do God's will, those who don't keep His commands will be denied by the Lord Himself.

2. *Ignorance of Jesus*: The second tragedy of a believing fool is not knowing Jesus personally. Lip service/lip confession alone will not prove that you know Jesus. Action on His words does: *He who doesn't keep His words doesn't know God* (1 John 2:3). Fools may confess that they believe in Jesus and love God until their face is blue, but if they hate their enemies, it makes them a liar (1 John 2:4). Listen. God always looks for His children who take His Word seriously, keeping and doing them every day. Fools don't understand this. They don't keep God's commands, either. Therefore, they don't know Jesus. Neither does Jesus know them.
3. *Fooling ourselves*. The last tragedy among the believing fools is self-deception. They live in illusion that they love God. That they are in the light. Only in feelings. Only in lip-service. Not in actions. What really matters is how God thinks of them. He declares if they don't keep His commands, they don't love Him. Once again, listen to God's Word carefully: *If we do not keep His commands, we have no love of God in us* (1 John 2:4, John 14:21, John 15:10). By believing something that is not true, the fools deceive themselves. Since they have no truth in them, they have no eternal life (John 12:50). No light in them, either (1 John 2:11). E.g. *The one who says that he is in the Light and yet hates his brother or sister is in the darkness until now* (1 John 2:9).

Conclusion

None of us wants to be a fool. God doesn't want you to be a fool, either. Everyone wants to be wise. God wants you to be wise, too.

Being wise before God is a two-way street. God and us. God, first, gives us His words to follow and live by. His words are essential to our life both temporal and eternal. Remember what Jesus said? *Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God* (Matthew 4:4). We hear His instructions and commands and put them into practice. Daily. Then, God says to us, you are wise. If we don't practice His instructions, God says to us, "You fool!" Simple as that.

What's the point? Do Jesus' words, not just hear them. Do them anyway, even though you don't understand the logic behind His words. You will understand it later and be glad that you have done it.

Action point: Practice the following Jesus' commands daily: *Be thankful in all circumstances. Do not worry about tomorrow. Pray. Be the wise. Amen.*