

## The Two Foundations

1 Corinthians 3:11 New American Standard Bible

*<sup>11</sup> For no one can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.*

Matthew 7:21-27 New American Standard Bible

*<sup>21</sup> “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. <sup>22</sup> 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?’ <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; leave Me, you who practice lawlessness.’*

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*“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. <sup>25</sup> 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. <sup>26</sup> 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. <sup>27</sup> 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

Whenever I have a chance to talk to young people especially in their 20s, I always advise them to ensure two things in their 20s: let Christ be the center/the foundation of their life (that is, to know Jesus Christ personally and walk with Him) and find a suitable life-long partner in Christ. Then, you’re ready, I tell them, to launch your own life and the rest will be well. This morning, let’s consider Christ as our life’s foundation and “all other grounds are sinking sand.”

## Content

**The Case of Bad Foundations:** Let me begin with a case of bad foundations. **Block 7** of Lotus Riverside Compound, Shanghai, China.



On June 27, 2009, Block 7, one of eleven 13-story apartment buildings... in Shanghai, toppled over, completely intact. The high-rise was still under construction, and luckily, most of the workers were able to evacuate the building when they felt it start to fall over. Unfortunately, one man wasted too many precious seconds collecting his tools. He was then forced to jump out of a window as the building began to go down. He fell to his death.

Block 7 met its demise just one day after 272 feet of a nearby riverbank collapsed, proving the area was unstable and that the soil was loose. Laborers worked through the night to shore up the river, but it was no use. People in the area reported that it felt like an earthquake when the building fell. When they ran outside,... they saw the massive structure lying flat with its foundation pillars uprooted.

(<https://www.bestonlineengineeringdegree.com/the-10-worst-high-rise-building-collapses-in-history/>)

**The Lesson:** when the foundation is shaken, the building collapses.

**The Case of Good foundations:** How about some good foundations? Such as pyramids in Egypt, Parthenon in Greece, and Colosseum in Rome that last for thousands of years. The oldest standing building still in use: Pantheon in Rome that was built in 126 A.D.

**What Are the Foundations for?** We all know that the foundations are laid to bear the load of the building. The life of the building entirely depends on the foundation. Let me read one article to you.

“Why Your Foundation Is the Most Important Part of Your House” by Andrew Morison

“It may seem like a simple part of the overall construction process, but getting the foundation right is incredibly important. The biggest reason for this is that any mistakes you make in the foundation will only get worse as you go up. It’s known as compounding defects and it means that mistakes grow. Here’s an example: You notice that your slab foundation is 3/4” out of square when you start framing. It’s also 1/2” out of level across the total building. You figure, “well, I can handle that. I’ll just adjust it in the framing.” As you complete the framing, you get up to the roof and notice that the building is now 1” out of square and 3/4”

out of level. Bummer, but you figure you can capture it in the roof framing. By the time your metal roof shows up, the square panels don't fit on your out of square roof and you have "to make it work." In the end, everyone and your grandmother can see that the roof is out of square and the simple mistake in your foundation has ruined the look of the house.

Here's another reason that your foundation deserves the highest focus and attention to detail: your entire house sits on top of it! If you skimp here and something fails, it's not an easy fix. Is it worth the extra few dollars to add a bit more rebar to the slab? Yes. **Ensuring that the foundation is built to the very best standards possible is very much worth it."**

[<http://www.strawbale.com/why-your-foundation-is-the-most-important-part-of-your-house/>]

**In Jesus' time, the usual house** was a rudimentary affair, **a whitewashed cube with few openings**, perhaps none except the door, and a **single room inside**, divided into two, one half for the animals, the other for the family (p. 218, *Daily Life in the Time of Jesus* by Henri Daniel-Rops). **Even for an ordinary house, foundations were taken very seriously, dug with the greatest care, the aim being to build upon rock**, lest the wind and the rain should come and carry the house away (p. 221, *Daily Life in the Time of Jesus* by Henri Daniel-Rops).

**Climate:** We also need to talk about the climate in Galilee at the time. **Rain**, for instance: on the high land of Galilee, they have 23 inches of rain fall a year. E.g. Manahawkin. 38 inches of rain over 112 precipitation days--- ([https://www.bestplaces.net/climate/city/new\\_jersey/manahawkin](https://www.bestplaces.net/climate/city/new_jersey/manahawkin)).

If calculated "inches by precipitation days," Galilee has more rain than Manahawkin. Anyway, in Galilee, **all this rain falls in a few days, almost all of them in October and in March**, in 'violent downpours' of which Jesus talks about in today's text (Matthew 7:27). As you can imagine, storms swell the wadies (*wadi*: Hebrew term for 'valley') in a few minutes and the waters can carry away houses if their foundations are wanting in strength (p. 24, *Daily Life in the Time of Jesus* by Henri Daniel-Rops).

**The Danger of "Flash Flooding":** We call it 'flash flooding.' It occurs when rain falls too quickly on saturated soil or dry soil that has poor absorption ability. The danger is **fast moving water**. "In deserts, flash floods can be **particularly deadly** for several reasons. **First**, storms in arid regions are infrequent, but they can deliver an **enormous amount of water in a very short time**. **Second**, these rains often fall on poorly-absorbent and often clay-like soil, which greatly increase the amount of runoff that rivers and other water channels have to

handle. These regions tend **not to have the infrastructure** that wetter regions have to divert water from structures and roads, such as **storm drains**, culverts, and retention basins, ... **Finally**, the lack of regular rain to clear water channels may cause flash floods in deserts to be headed by **large amounts of debris**, such as rocks, branches, and logs”  
[[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash\\_flood](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash_flood)].

This is the background of today’s text where Jesus points out the wisdom of building a house on solid rock. He is not really talking about a physical house, though. He is talking about our lives. Each one of us builds our life on something we call foundation in life. Question is: what is your foundation on which your life stands?

**We Are the Builders of Our Lives:** All of us have good days when everything goes well. Everything is sunny and rosy. Then, we also have stormy days. The rain, winds, and the waves represent life’s challenges. They all hit us. No one is exempt from hardships. The houses are our lives. In times of crisis, those rain, winds, and waves hit us hard. What determines the fate of our lives (whether we survive or collapse) is the foundation. Many people, including some believers, build their lives on unstable grounds such as selfishness, self-confidence, money, status, power, ambition, desires, lusts, etc. They are the foolish ones, Jesus says. Be the wise builder. Be the wise ones who build their lives on Jesus, the Rock, and on His words. When we keep His words and do what He says, our life house will stand strong; it will endure life’s storms and stand strong throughout our lives. Furthermore, it will determine our final destination, either in the presence of God or hell.

Please note here the difference between the wise and the fools: it is not whether you hear Jesus’ words or not. It is not whether you go to church or not. It is not how long you have been a member of the church, either. It is rather whether you act on and live out His words or not. In fact, all over the Scripture, this is a consistent theme and a reminder to God’s people: Obey God and Keep His words, then you will be His people and He shall be your God (Ezekiel 11:20). If you don’t, you are not His people. We simply cannot call the LORD our God unless we walk in His ways, keep His words, and do them.

Notice here too that the wise and the fools they both face and go through life’s challenges. The difference between them doesn’t show in peaceful times, but in times of adversity it becomes evident. Life’s storms will test all of us. The question is: do you want to stand strong in times of adversity? E.g., It is well with my soul. In 1873, Horatio Gates Spafford, a businessman in Chicago, sent his wife and four daughters by ship to Europe for a family vacation. The ship they were aboard collided with another ship and sunk in the Atlantic Ocean. His wife survived but not his daughters. Spafford took the next boat to

meet his wife in Wales. As his ship was sailing past the spot where his daughters perished, he wrote the poem “It is well with my soul.” “When peace, like a river, attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea-billows roll, whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, It is well, It is well with my soul.” His life was standing on the rock.

## Conclusion

The difference is the foundation: Rock vs. Sand. Every house must have a strong foundation. So does everyone’s life. What is your foundation? Sand—Outside appearance looks great but nothing to support the house in times of crisis. Rock—Strong and unshakable. No one wants to collapse in times of hardship. Yet not everyone does their homework to stay strong. The wise ones do the work during peaceful times. They act on Jesus’ words with the end in mind.

**Things Jesus Says We Ought to Do.** There are many things that Jesus commands us to do. In Luke 6 alone, Jesus commands us to do the following:

- Forgive.
- Give.
- Don’t judge/condemn.
- Be merciful as Your Father in Heaven is.
- Do unto others as you would have them do to you.
- Love Your Enemy.
  - Do Good to those who hate you.
  - Bless those who curse you.
  - Pray for those who mistreat you.

If you do all of these, Jesus says, you are wise. Your life is being built on the rock. If you disregard those commands of the Lord, you are foolish. Your foundation is like sand. Christ is the Rock. Build your life on Him. Keep His words and stand strong in the days of storm.

Let us pray.

Study Notes:

ΚΑΤΑ ΜΑΤΘΑΙΟΝ 7:24-27

1550 Stephanus New Testament

<sup>24</sup> πας ουν οστις **ακουει μου τους λογους τουτους** και **ποιει αυτους** ομοιωσω αυτον ανδρι **φρονιμω** οστις ωκοδομησεν την **οικιαν αυτου επι την πετραν**

<sup>25</sup> και κατεβη η **βροχη** και ηλθον οι **ποταμοι και επνευσαν οι ανεμοι** και προσεπεσον (fall) τη οικια εκεινη και **ουκ επεσεν τεθεμελιωτο** γαρ **επι την πετραν**

<sup>26</sup> και πας **ο ακουων μου τους λογους τουτους και μη ποιων αυτους** ομοιωθησεται **ανδρι μωρω** οστις ωκοδομησεν την οικιαν αυτου **επι την αμμον**

<sup>27</sup> και κατεβη η **βροχη** και ηλθον οι **ποταμοι και επνευσαν οι ανεμοι** και προσεκοψαν (stumble) τη οικια εκεινη και **επεσεν** και ην η πτωσις (fall) αυτης μεγαλη