

Wise and Foolish Builders

BIG IDEA:

Your life is in process. The end of your story is being built, and there are really only two endings. Choose the path that leads to stability and security, rejecting the foolish path of temporary pleasure in life.

I find I must borrow yet another parable from George MacDonald. 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 those 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 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 on an extra floor there, running up towers, making courtyards. You thought you were going to be made into a decent little cottage: but He is building a palace. He intends to come and live in it Himself.

C.S. Lewis
In Mere Christianity



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READ

Matthew 7:24-29 This section is the teaching of Jesus that Matthew through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit chose to close the Sermon on the Mount with. Read it as a “closing argument” for the main point of the entire passage. Also, flip back to Ecclesiastes 2:14 and consider what it has to say about the difference between the wise person and the fool.

What makes someone wise? Is it simply learning - not really, for many people with great learning are very foolish in their lives. In Ecclesiastes 2:14, Solomon teaches us that the wise person is someone who has “eyes in their head.” While I ponder how crazy it would have been for him to put them in some other area of the body, I realize that he’s talking about a person’s ability to see. He adds that “the fool walks in darkness.” Thus, the fool is someone who cannot see. So a wise person is someone who can look ahead and see what’s going to happen if they continue going in the direction they are headed now. Then, they either persist because they’re headed where they want to go, or they change in order to get to a new destination. The fool is someone who just does whatever they want in the moment, and says, forget about the consequences later. “I want what I want now and I’m willing to trade the future for it.” With this in mind, Jesus says in Matthew 7, that “... everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man...” Have you listened to Jesus?

Prepare

How do you recognize wisdom? Do you have the same standard as the biblical one of seeing and not seeing?

Have you listened to Jesus? You've been invited all year long to pay close attention to the teaching of Jesus - have you done so? Or have you given it up in order to pursue momentary things?

What particular areas of your life have you been foolish in? Are there any areas of your life that stand out as needing wisdom applied to them?

As you prepare for things ahead, what are some particular areas of your life that need the voice of God to speak into your plans. What are some things that you're planning for that you've ignored the voice of God?

Where do we go from here?

Make a list of all the things that you are planning. Start small. What will you do this week, this weekend, any plans for the next month? Work your way up to bigger things. What do you want to do after high school? What kind of vocation do you desire? Then ask your mentor or peer partner to look at your list. Ask them to discuss it with you and pray over these things, inviting Jesus into your planning.

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Luke 6:46-49 There's some distinct differences between this passage and the one in Matthew.

Allow yourself to consider the strength of the language and the impending doom for those who choose to ignore Jesus.

Do you ever think about the future? No, not flying cars and human cloning, not even who you'll marry or how many kids you'll have. I'm talking about you and your story, particularly its ending. Who are you? Did you make a difference? Will you be celebrated or simply grieved when you're gone? Mortality is a difficult subject to discuss, but this passage requires us to consider our own demise. Notice that the storm is coming. It makes no difference what you've made of your life, a storm will strike you. The question is, have you chosen a foundation for your life that can withstand the torrent? It is clear in the context of the Sermon on the Mount that Jesus is calling all people that hear Him to internalize His message. To become the kind of person who can withstand this coming trouble, you must trust in Him not only for eternity - that's just an extension of this life - but you must trust Him for every aspect of this present life. For all that you do and say. For your attitude towards your enemies. For your giving, your prayer and your anxieties. Give it all to Him, the foundation that can take care of you through the very last storm of life.

Prepare

What pain have you experienced in life?

How did you deal with this pain? Did it leave you still hurting? Do you feel scarred or ruined for the rest of your life?

Do you anticipate a day with even greater storms?

Have you trusted - really trusted Jesus with the practical areas of your life that need the strength only He can provide?

Where do we go from here?

IT IS TIME TO TRUST! There can be no more flirting with Jesus - you need to marry Him. Trust Him to carry through all of life and to faithfully meet your needs. Tell others that you trust Him. Put yourself on the line. Give them reason to believe that you mean it because you really do!

Chapel Scripture

Thursday, May 5

MATTHEW 7:24-29 (NIV)

24Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 25The 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. 26But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

28When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, 29because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

Notes:

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READ

In your own Bible, read through Matthew 5-7. If you're looking for a fresh look at the passage, try reading through it in *The Message*, a pseudo-translation that is written in an updated language. Read through the entire passage in one sitting (It'll take you about ten minutes) and then pause and reflect on the passage as a whole.

** If this devotional looks familiar, it is. This is the same as the very first one in the study. Please don't go back there and look at that one until you have finished this one. Then see how your thoughts now differ from your thoughts then!*

Commonly referred to as “The Sermon on the Mount,” these three chapters represent the longest uninterrupted teaching of Jesus recorded in the four Gospels. In all likelihood, this teaching took place over several days, and we’re now reading the abridged version. While there’s so many different topics contained in the sermon, a common thread binds it all together. As the gospel writer narrowed down all that Jesus said into a few pages of our Bibles, the thrust of the sermon remains undiminished. Jesus was making a pronouncement about the residence of His blessing, his kingdom, even His power and authority. External standards of rule and measurement will not suffice, but rather the true mark of a follower of God is the internal transformation that occurs as we enter into a trusting relationship with God. Be encouraged! The very real God has somehow seen fit to make camp in your soul. Relax! No amount of hard work will be able to make you into what you need to be. God has done, and continues to do it in you.

Reflect

What themes from Jesus' sermon stand out to you? Why do they catch your attention?

What do you think that Jesus may be trying to tell you, specifically, a couple thousand years after he spoke to his disciples from the mountainside?

In what ways do you tend to make the spiritual life an external practice? How have you made a ritual out of walking with Jesus?

What do you think it would take for the life of God to penetrate deeper within you?

Where do we go from here?

Go back and look at your answers to the very first devotional. Compare them to where you are now. How have you changed? What areas of growth can you testify to? Celebrate this! Talk to parents, mentors and peers about the things that you've seen God do in your own life.