

Sermon for 31/5/ to the 1/6/08

Matthew 7: 15-29.

Faith and obedience in Jesus is the key to the Christian life

This passage we are looking at is the last part of the Sermon on the Mount. It is interesting to note that Jesus was speaking to the disciples even though the crowd was present he was addressing the sermon to the disciples. The sermon is looking at the character and the conduct of a Christian. I think it is important to understand the relationship between the two. We do not grow from behaviour to nature by doing the right things we become the right person. Rather it is the reverse. By becoming the right person we do the right things. Jesus is always a Saviour before a teacher he changes what we are before changing what we do. This sermon is addressed to believers warning them of the danger of the broad road that leads to destruction and inviting them to the narrow road that leads to real life. Jesus says "if anyone does not remain in me he is like a tree branch that is thrown into the fire and burned. (John 15:6) Paul says for each one should be careful how he builds.

I know of a story of three builders, I am sure you have too.

Three pigs were sent out to build there houses.

The first little pig was given straw to build his house He was very pleased with his house. He said, "Now the wolf won't catch me and eat me

"I shall build a stronger house than yours," said the second little pig.

"I shall build a stronger house than yours, too," said the third little pig.

The second little pig was given some sticks and built his house of sticks; it was stronger than the house of straw. The second little pig was very pleased with his house. He said, "Now the wolf won't catch me and eat me."

"I shall build a stronger house than yours," said the third little pig.

The third little pig walked on, along the road, by himself. Soon he met a man carrying some bricks.

"Please will you give me some bricks?" asked the third little pig. "I want to build a house for myself."

"Yes," said the man and he gave the third little pig some bricks.

The third little pig was very pleased with his house. He said, "Now the wolf won't catch me and eat me."

The wolf came along and you know the rest of the story.

He huffed and puffed and blew in the house of straw down. He went to the house of sticks and again he huffed and puffed and blew in the house of sticks

He then went to the house of bricks and again he huffed and puffed and tried to blow the house down and he couldn't.

What kind of builders as Christians are we, what materials do we use to build our lives.

The bricks of our lives need to be built on the firm foundation of Jesus Christ, nothing else will do, when the wolf comes, such as pain, suffering, loss the bricks of our lives won't be able to be blown or pushed over because we have built our lives on the true rock which is Jesus Christ.

When we look at the example of the two houses it is not so much the houses as the type of builders and the materials they use. Jesus says everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them in to practice is liken to a wise man who build his house on the rock. **It is really about obedience.** To build on the rock means to be hearing and responding.

All people are given the most amazing opportunity of entering through the gate. Jesus is the gate. Inviting Jesus the Lord and Saviour of our lives, Jesus says that "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full. What does that mean? We all need to be brought into a living relationship with Jesus Christ so our lives are built on the right foundation so we are able to live this life effectively and get ready for heaven.

This passages in Matthew shows us we must decide, we must make a decision and put that decision into practice ,do we choose the narrow gate or the wide gate.

Which tree are we, the one that bears good fruit or the one that bears bad fruit. The good fruit of our lives, are we becoming more like Jesus, Is Jesus the core from which we live and work.

Each one should be careful how he builds. For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Christ Jesus. The foundation of the church of all believers is Jesus Christ. Nothing and no one else will do.

So many times , again and again I see through my work at the hospital those who have built their lives on the rock , even though the pain is horrific in people lives I hear people say , I know God is a good God in the face of the losing of their loved ones. The words I know God is a good God. The wolf is at the door, the wind and the rains are beating heavily but the foundation stays strong. Why because they are putting into practice the bricks Jesus has given them. The words of Christ and the whole bible they are obeying the words that they have heard. The bricks in the lives of many people I meet are bricks of trust and obedience in the face of death and despair.

Are you and I seeking to have a living relationship with Jesus Christ or are we just going through the religious motions of each week. Are we submitting our lives to Jesus in every area?

Are our lives characterised by integrity of belief and action. Is the love for God and his Son is love what moves us into action? These are some of the questions we need to answer if we are going to make the right choice.

From the story which little pig are we, The one who builds with straw, the straw of I have asked Jesus to be Lord and Saviour of my life but the wolf of time comes and I don't have enough time to spend hearing and responding to God.

Or the little pig which built with sticks, maybe the wolf of pride I have got the answer, I go to church each week, my attitudes and my motives are fine, I don't need to look at those internal areas in my life. That we become so self assured we don't need to listen to the Holy Spirit or to wise counsel around us.

Or the little pig which built house with bricks, it took him some time he thought about his life and how he would build what materials he would use. He knew about the wolf there would be times when he needed to stand strong and the only way to do that is to build on the right foundation with the right materials. The right foundation, Jesus Christ and the materials of hearing and responding, being and doing,

The bricks in our lives are choosing and to follow, to hear the words of Jesus and to put them into practice. The bricks of obedience and perseverance, In Hebrews it says " don't throw away your confidence it will be richly rewarded, we need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God you will received what he has promised.

IT has bee well said that the greatest need of many Christians is not to know more but to obey what they already know. To listen without obedience is foolish. The lordship of Jesus Christ in the life of his people is not an optional extra to the Christian life, but an

indispensable ingredient coming under the authority of Jesus and to be taken up with his interests and his purposes.

He replaces our poverty with his riches. He replaces our defeat with his victory. He replaces our weakness with his strength. He replaces our sin with his righteousness.

Lets not forget that Matthew's record of the Sermon on the Mount must be taken in the context of the entire Gospel. " She, Mary will give birth to a son and you, Joseph are to give him the name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins.

Within this context we, us , you and I are not pressed to despair to self rescue. Rather it presses men women and children to Jesus. It is not for nothing that the Sermon on the Mount begins with the demand for poverty of spirit. Understanding carries responsibility. IT is submission to the word of God and obedience to the will of God which are the foundation of our security and stability.

