

The following sermon was preached at Redemption Baptist Church on Sunday, 3 December 2023. We encourage you to look up the Scriptures that are referenced and see the context for yourself. May the Lord speak to your heart as you study His Word.

The Two Foundations

Matthew 7:24-29

In December of 2021, a couple named Carole and Eric moved into their newly-built dream home in the lovely neighbourhood of Hidden Canyon Estates, in Draper, Utah. The home that they had purchased was worth 1.1 million dollars; and it rested near the edge of a cliff overlooking a beautiful gorge, with majestic mountains in the distance. It seemed that the couple was “living the dream”—until the dream turned into a nightmare.

A couple months after they had moved into their home, they noticed that cracks were suddenly beginning to form in their garage, in their basement, and in the walls around their windows and doors. As the months went by, they increasingly heard loud cracking sounds in the house. Engineers, building officials, and public safety officers came to inspect, and found that the soil in that area was showing definite signs of being oversaturated and unstable, and of sliding. By October of 2022, the couple was ordered to evacuate immediately, for their own safety. The danger was so imminent, they were never permitted to set foot in the house again. Finally, on the snowy afternoon of 22 April 2023, passersby watched in shock and horror as Carole and Eric’s home, as well as another expensive home right next to theirs, creaked, groaned, began to move, and then, within seconds, completely collapsed, and slid down the steep hillside behind them. Very soon, the residents in several other homes nearby were told that they were going to have to evacuate, as well. As for Eric and Carole, they lost literally all their material possessions, since they had never been able to go back inside the house to move their things. Sobbing as she spoke, Carole said, “I visualized a lot of things for our lives in this home, and they were all wonderful and beautiful. And looking at this now, it’s a nightmare....A lot of grief and remorse of the things lost.”¹

Why did these families suffer this great loss? Because the contractors, Edge Homes, did not ensure that they were building their homes on stable ground. So it is with our lives. Our *lives* must be built upon a solid foundation: and there is only *one* solid Foundation upon which to build. The Foundation of which I speak is not an ideal, a philosophy, or a religion, but a living Person: and His name is the Lord Jesus Christ. Jesus is the solid Rock upon which every soul *must* build his life in this world, and his hope for eternity in the next world.

As Jesus finished His Sermon on the Mount, He contrasted the two possible paths through life. On the one hand, there is the path of self-righteousness, self-effort, self-esteem, self-confidence, and self-reliance; and on the other hand, there is the path of heart-repentance and faith in Jesus Christ *alone*. As for righteousness, there is, on the one hand, phony, outward righteousness (otherwise known as “hypocrisy”), which comes naturally to all of us; and on the other hand, there is *true* righteousness, which does *not* come naturally to us. *True* righteousness is necessary in order to enter the Kingdom of Heaven; but the only way to obtain true righteousness is through repentance and faith in the Righteous One, the Lord Jesus Christ. The “house” of your life may look beautiful; but if it be built upon self, and not Christ, then your life *will* surely fall; and when it falls, the destruction will be great, and horrible.

This morning, we will be examining Jesus’ final words in the Sermon on the Mount; and as we do so, we will be taking a close look at these two foundations. The title of this message is ***The Two Foundations***.

Read Matthew 7:24-29.

I. The firm foundation (vv. 24-25)

Throughout this sermon, Christ has been speaking, first and foremost, to His true disciples—those who were the children of the Kingdom; and now, as He is coming down to the end of the sermon, He has one last word of encouragement for His true followers. He says, ***“Therefore whosoever heareth these saying of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock.”***

Now, this statement reveals a couple things. First, it reveals *who Jesus is*. It reveals, indirectly, that He is *God!* How does this statement show that Jesus is God? Because Jesus compares *His words* to a *foundation* upon which to build your life! The prophets of old had always said, “Thus saith the LORD,” or, “The word of the LORD came to me.” By saying such things, they were acknowledging that these were not actually *their own* words, but *God’s* words, which He had given to them by inspiration. In contrast, *Jesus* says that ***“Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine”*** is like unto ***“a wise man, which built his house on a rock”!*** Jesus was saying that the words that He was speaking were *actually His*. This sets Him apart from every other prophet who ever lived! Now, make no mistake about it: Jesus did often claim to be speaking His Father’s words. Yet, on many other occasions (sometimes in the very next breath), He claimed that these were *His own* sayings. Earlier in this same sermon, Jesus had said, ***“It was said by them of old time”***—meaning, “It was spoken in the Scriptures”; but then, in the very next breath, He went on to say, ***“But I say unto you.”*** Time and time again, Jesus said, ***“Verily, verily, I say unto you.”*** Jesus put His own words on the same level of authority as the Scriptures of Old! Jesus is claiming to be the *Author* of Scripture; and He is asserting that we must build our lives upon *His* words!

Now, the second thing that this statement reveals is *who the children of the Kingdom are*. Jesus says that a man who *does* His words (and not simply *hears* them), is like a wise man who built his house upon a rock. What does Jesus mean by this? Is He saying that salvation is obtained by *doing* good things in order to *earn* forgiveness of sins and eternal life? No! Scripture makes it clear that salvation is a free gift, which we must receive by faith in Christ, and in His sacrifice for us. Jesus earned our salvation for us, on the cross; and there is no amount of good works that *we* could possibly do to earn it. What *does* Jesus mean, then? Once again, Jesus is simply showing us what the life of a true believer looks like. A true believer’s life is characterized by *obedience to God*. Now, obedience is not always *easy*, even for the believer. We still have a sinful nature, which wars against us every day; and for this reason, the Apostle James had to remind believers, ***“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.”*** Christian living *is* a battle; however, the true child of the Kingdom has both the inward desire, and the *power*, through Christ, to obey God.

If you have placed your faith in Christ for salvation, then you have grounded your life upon the solid Rock of Jesus Christ. What about the *house itself*, though? If the Foundation of the believer’s life be Christ, then what is the house itself made of? The “house” of your life is constructed with the works that you do in this life; and if you are allowing Christ, the Master

Builder, to provide you with solid materials to build your house (things such as faith, love, truth, virtue, humility, meekness, kindness, mercy, peace-making, righteousness, longsuffering, patience, and self-control), the house itself will be sound. However, it all must begin with the *foundation* of Christ! If you have not been born again—if you have not repented of your sin and placed your faith in Jesus to save you—then you are *not* building your life upon Christ; and your house *will* surely fall! You *must* ground the house of your life upon Christ and His words! Your hope for this life, and for eternity, *must* be grounded in *Christ*, and in His promise of salvation. Jesus promised, “*All that the father giveth to me shall come to me; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.*”

Now, the teaching that Christ is the Foundation was nothing new. Jesus wasn’t throwing out a “new” idea, here. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments, the Messiah is pictured as “the Rock”! Before he died, Jacob prophesied that out from the mighty God of Jacob would come forth “*the shepherd, the stone of Israel.*” This “stone,” or “rock” of Israel, is pictured again and again throughout the Old Testament. Let’s see what King David said about Him.

Read Psalm 118:22-23.

Like so many other psalms, **Psalm 118** (especially the last half of the chapter) is a prophecy of the future Kingdom Age. It is a depiction of that glorious, golden age—that 1,000 years when Israel will be exalted among the nations, and when the whole world will be filled with peace and prosperity. However, you can’t have a kingdom without a king; and *Israel’s Messiah* is the King who will rule over the whole earth! *Israel’s Messiah* is the One upon whom the governance of Israel, and of the whole world, will rest. With this in mind, let’s look at what David is saying here in **verses 22 and 23**. In these verses, David likens Israel, during the future Kingdom age, to a house that has just finished being built. Yet, we find something very strange—and tragic! David says that the very *eben* (the foundation stone) of the “house” of Israel would be rejected by the builders! And who are the builders of the house? The people of Israel themselves! *Why* would the people of Israel reject the very Foundation of their own nation? And who or what *is* the Foundation which they rejected? It is their own King and Messiah—the Stone of Israel! When Jesus came to this earth, He offered Himself to Israel as their King and Messiah; but as a nation, they rejected Him; and because they rejected their Foundation Stone, the building project of the “house” of Israel had to be set aside.

Read Matthew 21:33-45.

Jesus warned Israel that because they had chosen to reject Him, the Kingdom of God (the *invisible, spiritual* realm of those who are born again) would be taken from them, and given to a “nation” (or “people”) who *would* bring forth spiritual fruit. Now, make no mistake about it: God is not done with Israel! Israel’s spiritual blindness is only temporary. The Kingdom of Heaven (the physical, 1,000-year Kingdom here on earth), as well as the Kingdom of God (the spiritual realm of those who are born again) *will* come to the nation of Israel, after Christ

returns to earth. During the fiery judgments of the Tribulation period, Israel *will* believe on Jesus; and *every* Jew who enters into the 1,000-year Kingdom will be a saved Jew. *Every Jew* entering the Kingdom will be a member both of the physical Kingdom of Heaven, *and* of the spiritual Kingdom of God. This is the LORD's doing; and it is, truly, "**marvellous in our eyes.**" It is miraculous! On that glorious day, Israel's Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth, will become the "**head stone of the corner**" (the "cap" stone at the *top* of the building). He will be both the Foundation stone *and* the Cap stone of Israel. From beginning to end, it will all be about *Him*! After centuries of rejecting Him, Israel will finally say to Jesus of Nazareth, "*Baruk haba b'shem Jehovah*" ("**Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the LORD**")! Until that future day when Israel receives Her King, the "house" that should have been built 2,000 years ago will remain "desolate": but doubt it not: the house of Israel *will* be built, with Jesus Christ as their Foundation! The *literal* house of God (the Temple) will be rebuilt, as well; and Christ Himself will sit on His throne in that Temple, as both King and Priest!

But what is God doing in the meantime? *Israel's* house is lying desolate, for now; but is God building any *other* house? Yes, He is! Remember, Jesus said that He would give the "Kingdom of God" (the spiritual realm of those who are born again) to a nation, or "people," bringing forth the fruit thereof. Who are these "people"? They are all who are born again during this church age, whether they be Jew or Gentile. And what is the "house" that God is building? It's called the local, New Testament church!

Read Ephesians 2:19-22.

Read 1 Corinthians 3:9-16.

Read 1 Peter 2:1-9.

Not only is Christ the Foundation Stone of Israel; He also is the Foundation Stone of the church. During this present age, the *local church* is the spiritual building that God has chosen to use; and Paul says that "**Jesus Christ himself**" is "**the chief corner stone**" of that building. He also affirms that "**other foundation can no man lay that that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.**" Peter likened the local church to a "**spiritual house**" with a "**holy priesthood**" (saved church members) serving inside its spiritual walls; and he affirms that "**the stone which the builders disallowed** (Christ), **the same is made the head of the corner.**" And what are the *building materials* of this house called "the church"? Well, in one sense, the "building blocks" of the church are its *members*, whom God has compacted tightly together. (We saw this in **Ephesians 2.**) In another sense, the "building blocks" are the *works* of the church members (as we saw in **1 Corinthians 3**). Brethren, these two truths are very convicting! First, it shows that if you are saved, you need to *become a member of* a local church—either by being baptised into membership, or (if you have already been baptised) by *transferring* your membership from another Bible-preaching church. Secondly, it shows that the members of Christ's church *must* be living holy lives! If we are living after the flesh (whether openly or

secretly), then we are building the spiritual “walls” of God’s house with perishable materials, which will not be able to stand. *Other* church members may be living godly lives, and laying down solid materials; but if *you* are allowing worldliness and sin in your life, the blocks that *you* are laying down will cause the structure to crack and crumble; and they will not stand the “fire” of God’s judgement when we stand before Christ one day to give account. There will be no revoking of salvation for any child of God at the Judgment Seat of Christ; but the things we did for the flesh will be burnt up, and we will receive no reward for them.

Now, this brings us to yet one more “house” of which Jesus is the Foundation: and that “house” is the life of each individual believer. *This* is the house that Christ is talking about here in **Matthew 7**. It is also the “house” that *Isaiah* was talking about in **Isaiah 28**, when He prophesied of the Messiah.

Read Isaiah 28:14-16.

In this passage, the Lord is rebuking the nation of Israel for placing their trust in heathen allies, instead of in Him; and He foretells of a day when He will lay in Mount Zion (in Jerusalem) a foundation stone, a ***“tried stone, a precious corner stone.”*** This Stone is Israel’s Messiah, Jesus Christ; and, as we have already seen, the nation of Israel will be built upon Him during the Kingdom Age! However, this verse applies not merely to the *nation* of Israel; it also applies to *individuals*. *Isaiah* says, ***“he that believeth shall not make haste.”*** That word “he” makes it *personal*. *Each soul* must decide what He will do with Jesus!

Now, let’s look at how *Isaiah* describes the life of the man (or woman) who ***“believes”*** on the Messiah. For one thing, he says that that soul ***“shall not make haste.”*** In the New Testament, when Paul and Peter cited this verse, they used the words “confounded,” and “ashamed” to draw out the meaning of the word “hake haste.” You see, this Hebrew expression “make haste” means to live in a state of constant toil, upheaval, weariness, and hurry, without any quietness or rest. What is the LORD saying, then? He is saying that those who do not believe on Christ do not know what true rest of the soul is, because they are trying to build their lives upon a crumbling foundation. Those who rest upon Christ and His promises, however, know what it means to have internal quietness and peace. *Christ is Peace* for every soul who believes on Him. The LORD said in **Isaiah 57**, ***“I create the fruit of the lips; Peace, peace to him that is far off, and to him that is near, saith the LORD; and I will heal him. But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”*** Those who do not know Christ may try to keep up an outward façade of happiness and contentment; but inside, they are miserable, and fearful of the future, because they know that everything they are working so hard to build in this life could come crashing down tomorrow. Because they are not building their lives upon Christ, the Author of Peace, their souls are filled with turmoil! On the other hand, those who believe on Christ are filled with rest, assurance, and peace—the kind of peace that Francis Havergal was talking about when she wrote, *“Hidden in the hollow of His blessed hand, Never foe can follow, never traitor stand; Not a surge of worry, not a shade of care, Not a blast of*

hurry touch the spirit there. Stayed upon Jehovah, hearts are fully blest; Finding, as He promised, perfect peace and rest.”

How else does Isaiah describe the man (or woman) who believes on Christ? He says that that soul has **“*tried*”** the Foundation stone, and has found Him to be sure. Christ is a **“*tried stone*”**; and those who believe on Him have *tested* Him, and found Him to be faithful! From the beginning of the world, Christ, in His deity, always kept His promises to his people; and as a Man here on earth, Christ ran the race with patience, and passed every test perfectly. Not one word He has spoken has ever failed. Christ’s character is proven and sure; and because believers have found Christ to be a **“*tried stone*,”** they may have absolute assurance of their position in Christ. For this reason, they have also found Him to be **“*precious*.”** Christ is a **“*precious corner stone*”** to all who believe. Christian, aren’t you glad that you found the “precious corner stone” of Christ? Aren’t you glad that He invited you to build your life upon Him, and that He received you? I am! Like Charles Gabriel, I can truly say, *“Tis heaven below my Redeemer to know, for He is so precious to me.”* When the storms of life are howling all around me like a hurricane, and the floods are beating against my “house,” I know that it will not fall, because my life is built upon the Rock of Ages!

II. The frail foundation (vv. 26-27)

(Read verses 26-27 again.) We have seen that Christ is the only firm Foundation upon which we can build our lives. Those who believe on Christ have no need to be troubled, hurried, ashamed, or confounded, because they have built their lives upon the Rock. What does this mean, though, for those who have *not* believed on Christ? Just the opposite! If you are building your life upon *your own* wisdom, or upon *your own* righteousness, or for *your own* pleasure and glory, your house will surely fall.

First, those who have not believed on Christ are **“*ashamed*”** and **“*confounded*.”** The LORD says that those who believe on the Messiah will *not* **“*make haste*,”** or be **“*ashamed*,”** or **“*confounded*”**: this means, then, that those who *do not* believe on Him will **“*make haste*,”** and will be **“*ashamed*,”** and will be **“*confounded*.”** Those who do not know Christ have no sure foundation upon which to stand; and though they may do their best to look as though they “have it all together,” they know, deep inside, that not all is well. As life goes by, and as death draws nearer, and as the thought of their own mortality becomes more real every day, they become increasingly alarmed; and no matter how hard they try to mend the growing “cracks” in the house of their lives with money and possessions, or with sinful pleasures, or with relationships, or with family ties, or with achievements and accomplishments, or even with drugs, alcohol, or medication, they cannot shake that nagging sense of emptiness, and of *fear*.

Another characteristic of those who are not building their lives upon Christ is that they *stumble*. In **Isaiah 8:14**, Isaiah prophesied that the Messiah would be **“*for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and***

for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem.” To those who believe on Christ, He is a “*sanctuary*”—a place of refuge. Just as the beautiful stone temple of Solomon stood for hundreds of years on Mount Zion, and provided shelter for countless generations of Jewish worshippers, so Christ is the place of sanctuary and safety to all who believe on Him. However, to those who have *not* believed on Him, He is a Stone of stumbling. In **1 Peter 2:8**, Peter said that those who are disobedient and unbelieving of God’s Word find Christ to be a “*stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence.*” Even in this life, those who have not believed on Christ will “stumble” over Him in disbelief, as they try to navigate through the treacherous gins and snares of this world without the light of Christ and His Word; and they *will* be hurt. They will fall backward, and be broken, snared, and taken by their own sin, and by Satan, the enemy of our souls. However, the worst part of all is that in the end, when they pass into eternity, those who rejected Christ **will be destroyed.**

Remember what Christ said to the Pharisees in **Matthew 21:44**? He said, “*Whosoever shall fall on this stone* (meaning, “Himself”) *shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.*” Simply put, if you refuse to build your life upon the Rock of Jesus Christ, then one day, the very Rock which *could* have been your Foundation will *crush and destroy you*. Those who stand before Christ without having trusted in His saving blood will hear the awful words, “*Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: I never knew you.*” My friend, don’t let this be you! If you have not repented of your sin, and placed your faith in the saving work of Christ on Calvary, what are you waiting for? Believe on Him today, and establish your life upon the Rock of Christ!

III. The authority of Christ (vv. 28-29)

(Read verses 28 and 29 again.) As Jesus closed His sermon with the warning to build your life upon the Foundation of Himself and His words, the people were “*astonished at his doctrine.*” And why were they astonished? Because “*he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.*” What does this mean?

First, it means that Christ was authoritative in the *way* He presented truth. The scribes and the Pharisees were constantly quoting “Rabbi so-and-so.” They constantly fell back on the “authority” of ancient traditions, which had been passed down through the centuries by men who claimed to sit in “the seat of Moses.” In contrast, Jesus spoke from His *own* authority! Even the *real* prophets of the Old Testament did not really speak their own words, but the words of the LORD, which He gave to them. Some of them (men such as Jonah, or Obadiah) were given a small amount of revelation; and others (men such as Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah) were given a *tremendous* amount of revelation by the Holy Spirit. However, even Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah cannot hold a candle to the dazzling Sunlight of the Lord Jesus Christ! *Christ* has the Spirit of God without measure, because He is one with the Father and the Holy Spirit. *He Himself is God.* Even John the Baptist (who, Jesus said, is the greatest of all the prophets) admitted that “*A man can receive nothing, except it be given him from heaven.*” As mere men, Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah could have no knowledge

of truth without receiving it from God. Jesus, however, speaks the words of God *all the time*, and by His own authority, because He is God in human flesh! No wonder the people were astonished! God Himself was among them, in human flesh, speaking directly to them!

However, not only was Christ authoritative in the *way* He presented truth; He was also authoritative in *what* truth He presented. Though Jesus often taught truths that had already been spoken in the Old Testament, His doctrine was new in its power and simplicity. Let's look at an example.

Read John 13:34-35.

What did Jesus mean when He said that He was giving His disciples a “*new*” commandment? The command to “love one another” was actually a very *old* commandment. **Leviticus 19:18** says, “*Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.*” If the command to “*love thy neighbour*” had been around since the time of Moses, then why was Jesus calling it “new”? In answer to this question, an examination of the Greek comes in handy. There are two words for “new” in Greek. The word *neo* means “new” in sense of *time*; but the word *kainon* means “new” in sense of *quality*. As it turns out, *kainon* is the word that Jesus used when He said, “***A new commandment I give unto you.***” Jesus’ meaning, then, is clear. He wasn’t saying that this was a *brand-new* commandment, which no one had ever heard of before: He was saying that it was “new” in sense of *quality*. The command to “*love thy neighbour*” existed before Christ went to the cross; but it now has a whole new *force and power* behind it. Why? Because perfect love has now been *demonstrated* to us by the Author of Love Himself—the God-Man, Jesus Christ! He *is* the Love of God in human flesh.

Read Titus 3:4-7.

Believers who lived in Old Testament times knew that they needed to love one another; but they had never seen perfect, selfless love demonstrated by any member of the human race. When Jesus Christ went to the cross for us, perfect, selfless, sacrificial love was manifested for all to see! We now have a perfect Model to follow in our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the sinless Man. Therefore, we should follow His steps! The lost world should be able to look at the genuine, selfless love radiating from a Christian, and think, “I’ll bet that that person is a Christian!”

Christ’s words are filled with all the authority of the Godhead; but if you are not *obeying* His words, and following Christ’s example, lost people around you will not be attracted to Him. Christian, by living a life of faith and obedience to Christ, the world will see the power of God in you. Let Him work His righteousness in you!

Conclusion: Christ spoke with astonishing authority, because He is God in human flesh. His words cannot be ignored, because He is our Creator, King, Lawgiver, and Judge. In the Sermon on the Mount, Christ has spoken with all the authority of the Godhead. He has shown us what true righteousness is, and what phony righteousness is: and He has made it clear that no one can enter the Kingdom without having the true righteousness that only God can impart to us. As we close this message (and this whole series on the Sermon on the Mount), I would ask: “Do *you* have Christ’s righteousness?” Has there been a point in your life when you were truly broken about your sin, and desired to have Christ’s righteousness? Have you ever repented of your sin, and trusted in Christ alone to save you, and to give you *His* righteousness? If not, please do so today! To those who are saved already, I would ask, “Are you living for Christ?” Are you allowing Christ to live His righteousness through you every day? Or are you mainly doing your own will? If so, allow Him to purify your heart, so that you might glorify your Father in Heaven!

¹ <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-12004655/Moment-two-Utah-houses-worth-combined-2m-slide-CLIFF-build-unstable-ground.html>