

## **Firm Foundation - Taylor Woodburn** **Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup>, 2026 - 10:00 a.m.**

### Introduction

A few year ago, I heard a sermon where the pastor talked about his high school senior year schedule. He was really bragging because he thought he had the best senior year schedule known to man. There is only one way that he could be so confident in his schedule being the best. It's because he didn't know my senior year schedule in high school. I know some of you might think that you had it good, but let me tell you my senior year schedule. You ready?

Period 1. Vocals. Period 2. Gym. Period 3. Instrumental or band. Period 4. Video Editing.

Let me tell you how happy and excited I was for this schedule. I gamed the system because every single one of those classes were university credits. I can tell you right now, that the only reason I got into anything university was because of: vocals, gym class, band, and video editing. As you probably already figured out . . . I didn't really take high school too seriously. In fact, I saw school as a place to socialize and to play sports. . . and yes I know it was a place to learn. But I really figured that out . . . after I graduated. My mom would often tell me that if I had put in as much effort into school as I did with trying to get out of school, that there would be nothing I couldn't do.

Whenever there was a new concept being taught, as you probably have guessed, I would be distracted by my friends, trying to get the attention of the girl from across the room, or trying to get that envied hall pass. And then without fail, the next day when we walked into class . . . there would be a pop quiz. I hated quizzes so much . . . and most of it was my fault.

These quizzes, these tests are in place to determine if we were getting the concepts that were being taught. The person who sat at the front and took diligent notes the day before, and studied all night to the person who sat at the back and goofed off all class and who hasn't cracked open their textbook all year. Everyone was getting the test.

But something I had figured out is that when I graduated is that the testing doesn't stop.

- You are tested in your communication skills when you are met with a conflict.
- You are tested in your patience when your brother takes your clothes for the third day in a row.
- You are tested in your budgeting when you want to go on that special trip.
- Your are tested in your driving skills when you hit that ice patch
- You are tested in your resilience when the life you thought you were building begins to seemingly fall apart in front of you.

And testing is exactly what's taking place in our passage for this morning. Let's read it together.

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### Scripture

Matthew 7:24–27 ESV

24 "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does 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 beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do 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 beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

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### Tension

This portion of scripture serves as the cumulation of all of Jesus' teaching on the sermon on the mount. It is the conclusion to Jesus' most famous speech, and it is one of the most important teachings we have in the gospels.

Jesus' speech touches on the concerns of daily existence, poverty, hunger, generosity, the validity of the law, humbleness, and the beatitudes within this sermon seek to raise those concerns to another dimension.

The sermon on the mount calls the church to live according to kingdom values with disciples living under God's rule rather than societal norms. It critiques the Pharisees legalism and demands a true righteousness - which is a righteousness of the heart that the law cannot produce.

Then on the tail end of this sermon that spans over three chapters, encompassing 110 verses, we run into the text that we are looking at this morning. Jesus is contrasting two people. These two people build their structures either in obedience or disobedience. Listen,

- The fate of the structures is not due to building materials
- The fate of the structures is not due to the expertise of the builder
- The fate of the structures is not on how many stories tall the structures are built.
- The fate of the structure is all because of obedience or disobedience.

Lets look at the very first thing that Jesus says about both builders.

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### Building Location

Of the wise builder, Jesus says Matthew 7:24 “24 “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.” , and of the foolish builder Jesus says Matthew 7:26 “26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.”

I'm not sure if you have noticed this yet, but everybody has something to say.

(A few years ago the water main in Calgary broke, and everyone that I met was all of a sudden an expert on the water system. Now, we live about 10 minutes outside of Calgary, and during this water crisis, I discovered that our water supply just came from Calgary. Where did I think our water came from? No clue. It was just something I never thought about. But I can tell you that about 20 minutes into the water crisis, I had an opinion on what we should be doing. It wasn't very educated, but it was an opinion.) \*\*Potentially Omitted.

If you're going through a crisis and you post it on one of your social platforms or talk about it with a variety of people, you will get flooded with responses of people who have ideas on what you should be doing.

Most of what people will say are actually good and well meaning. You spouse, your boss, your children - even the stranger on the street. They all generally will have good meaning opinions.

But sometimes they can be so polarizing that it can be confusing. Now, I did a quick google search on “why do bad things happen to me” . . . generally when people ask this question, the response is empathetic.

- The website better help had a list of 10 daily challenges that you could do to prevent “bad things” such as eating healthy and exercising.
- Another website said “bad things are happening to you because you are expecting it”
- wikihow says among other things “it's because of unrealistic expectations” or being “surrounded by negative people” or “having an all or nothing mindest”
- Reddit was ... interesting to say the least
- still another website was filled with new age exercises to get rid of your “bad energy”

Now, when we look at what was encouraged from this google search, some was good advice and some, not so much.

Throw in what your best friend would tell you to do or your spouse and your head can start spinning.

But Jesus said, “those who hear these words of mine”

What I find so fascinating is the contrast between those who have built their house on the sand and those who have built their house on the rock. See, in the past attributed those who built their house on the rock as followers of Christ. Like, He's our rock, our refuge, our source etc.

Those who built their house on the sand, I attributed to people who don't have a relationship with Christ. That's no true though. Catch this this morning. The immediate people that Jesus was talking to were those who heard the sermon on the mount.

- They heard Jesus' teaching on prayer,
- They heard Jesus' teaching on the validity of the law,
- They heard Jesus' teaching on anger and lust and trusting God.

There is familiarity between them and Christ. What is interesting is the process of the formation of sand. See, 10's of thousands of years ago that sand was a rock, but it was the constant exposure to water hitting the rock that began to break it down and turned it into the product that we see today.

Can I tell you this morning, that those who built their house on the sand are those who have chosen a watered down foundation. They say they are followers of Christ, but over time they have allowed the constant exposure of societal pressures, political pressures, pressures from friends, workplaces, some family members, to erode the rock and now they have picked and chosen which aspects of Christianity, which aspects of God's Word that they should build their lives on. Today, let me re-affirm for you that in this church, God's Word is the foundation in which we build our lives off of. If I am leading this church, the Word of God will be the foundation in which be build everything off of. I will also work hard to ensure that this sometimes complicated text is relevant to our lives so that the youngest person who is in attendance, to the oldest person can see how the Word of God is applicable to them, today.

What I love is in the Psalms, the Psalmist tells us that there is a blessing which comes to those whose life is governed by the law of God, and that the man, that person they will be like a tree whose roots go down, they are firm and secure. Which is incredibly important because at some point, storms come.

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### The Storm

This is exactly what happens next, this is what Jesus says about the wise builder Matthew 7:25a “ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house...” for the foolish builder, Jesus says “Matthew 7:27a “And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house...”

Both structures experienced the same storm.

The location of the house doesn't shield you from trials. Trials come to the one who built their house on the sand, trials come to the one who built their house on the rock. In fact, you cannot justify the additional work it takes to build your house on a rock unless you accept the inevitability of a storm in your life. If there are no storms, then sand is as good of a foundation as any.

I want you to keep in mind that the testing and the storm is not just now, but it is also in the future, it is eschatological where God tests what you built your life upon. Today, we are focusing on the now, so you have a firm foundation - then. Those who listened to God, and those who didn't listen to God all experienced storms. We can sometimes get into the mindset that storms only come to those who built their houses on the sand. I mean, they didn't listen to God and so bad things are happening because of their disobedience.

So, if I am experiencing hardship:

- If I lost my job
- If my car breaks down
- if my sister is sick
- If I am having trouble making my bills
- If I don't get into that program of my dreams, or get passed up for promotion.

Then I can begin to ask where I have been disobedient to God. We begin to analyze ourselves to see where we might have gone wrong. Honestly, there can be some benefit to that, but we won't get into that this morning.

I hope you can see that the people who built their house on the sand and the people who built their house on the rock, all experience the same type of storm. They all experienced rain, flooding, and wind storms.

Can I tell you this morning, and there might be one or two people who need to hear this today.

- The presence of a storm in your life is not indicative of your relationship with God
- The presence of a storm doesn't dictate whether or not you are loved by God
- The presence of a storm isn't the evidence of if you have heard God incorrectly
- The presence of a storm IS the evidence that you are alive, and life happens to everyone.

What happens when a storm comes is that it reveals foundations. In this story, Jesus isn't talking about mild weather. He is referring to heavy rains, flooding, and violent winds, all which would expose faults in any foundation.

On December 10, 2023, a tornado ripped through Clarksville Tennessee. When the weather teams went to observe the destruction so they could determine the strength of the tornado, they discovered that many houses on Eva drive had been shifted off of their foundation. While the teams were originally impressed at the strength of the tornado, they quickly realized that it wasn't necessarily the strong tornado, but rather a weak foundation that was the cause of the destruction.

They discovered that many of the houses were secured to their foundation by . . . construction tape and some nails. When the storm hit the house, it didn't stand a chance and what was left was the proof of the poor foundation.

The Psalmist tell us that Ps 127:1

Psalm 127:1–2 ESV

1 Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. 2 It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.

What the Psalmist is trying to tell us is that the attempt to build the house ourselves is absolutely pointless. Success only comes from the hand of God.

- Waking up early does not help
- Going to bed early does not help
- The stability of your financial portfolio doesn't help
- Your degrees do not help
- Taking your vitamins, going to the gym, and hiring a personal trainer does not help.

Unless what you do is submitted to God and if God comes first in your life at some point will lead to anxiety if the foundation of all you do is not built upon God.

Let me ask you a question this morning, when the storms of life come, and your foundation is exposed . . . is what is shown proof that you have built your life on a firm foundation? Is it proof that you have heard the words of Jesus and obeyed, or is it proof that you have heard the words of Jesus and decided to do your own thing?

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## Results

Then Jesus shows us the results of both of the wise and foolish builder.

After the storm, Jesus says of the wise builder's house Matthew 7:25 "... it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock." But the foolish builder's house Matthew 7:27 "... fell, and great was the fall of it."

\*\*\*Cue IMAG\*\*\*

For Jesus, the proof of what you build your house on is shown after the storm has gone through.

\*\*\*Walk over to Jenga\*\*\*

Over here is a game that most of us in this room should know fairly well. The goal of this game is to build it up as high as you possibly can. If I wanted to knock it down, I'm not going to aim for the top of it, I am going to work to weaken the foundation.

There are some of you who are in this room who you grew up in church, your mom and dad taught you the bible every night before you went to bed.

Others of you may have been saved later on in life, and you began to build your life on the word of God, build your life on the rock.

Then someone may have come along and told you that God doesn't allow good people to go through bad things, and it wasn't much longer until someone you know who loved God get sick. . . well, if that's no real, I wonder what else is not real?  
\*\*take out a block\*\*

Maybe you go to school and you meet an athiest. You've gone to church your whole life, but the way they live their life is SO different than the way you have lived your life. Now you're thinking. . . I wonder what else is out there \*\* take out a block. You might have gotten your first job, and during lunch break you begin to talk to someone who used to go to church, and they begin to talk about if God is so loving then why does He send good people to go to hell, so you decide that it might be time to deconstruct your faith \*take out a block

How many people are anxious right now? This is what it feels like to have no foundation.

Then the storm comes. Lightly push the jenga. There are some people who this is exactly what your life feels like. But this isn't God's fault, but oftentimes God gets the blame for it.

Jesus is saying the Word of God is what we can build our house on but so many people have surface (watered down?) relationships with it. Then when the word of God fails them, then God fails them and they throw Him away. I'm here to tell you today that the Bible works. You just didn't build your house on it, you built your house on the sand.

- Listen, if you are here this morning and your life looks like this. You've got an incredible church family that will do this . . . help you pick up those pieces that have fallen apart and help you build your foundation upon the rock.
- You may be here this morning and are new to faith. Well, you will find a great team of people here that will help to ensure you are building your life on the right foundation.
- You could be here and life has been great and you have been apart of this community for a while. Well, there are great people around you who can peer into your life and ensure that your foundation is still solid.
- Here's the thing. In this city of Newmarket, and in York Region there are so many people walking around with no foundation and their life is a mess. The only way to fix it is Jesus. We get to be a church that helps them build their life upon the rock.

Alright, so we've got the location of the house, the storm the house faces, and the outcome of the house. But what did Jesus say, Jesus said "everyone who hears these words of mine and acted on it." We've got to give Jesus a chance to be heard.

The challenge is that in our world, right now everyone is fighting to tell you what you should be doing with your life.

- Our culture says, make as much money as you can so you can get the newest, brightest, baddest, flashiest thing. Let the world stop and stare at what you have accomplished.
- God says, it's okay to have money but money cannot be first in your life Let the world stop and start at what God has accomplished in your life.
- Our culture tells you to do what makes you happy
- God says that true happiness can only be found through being who your were created to be. That is discovered through close relationship with God.

So, in the midst of culture telling us what to do, and it's often conflicting messages to our Christian world view, how do we recognize God's voice?

We get close to the shepherd. Jesus said in John 10,

John 10:27 ESV

27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.

Jesus said that sheep are familiar with His voice and they will follow where he leads them.

**\*\* Worship team out\*\***

So, how do we build our life on the rock? Well, we first give Jesus a chance to be heard, and then we follow where He leads us.

Pretty simple eh? No! This is something that is so easy in theory but so hard in practicality.

- The busyness of life hits and you might have the best intentions to keep Jesus' voice first, but you also might have discovered that it's been a month since you've read the bible.
- Your job might be asking you to do something that's kind of in the grey area, and although you know you should say no, you could be getting a promotion soon and saying no to this might sink your chances.
- You didn't manage your time well and now you have a test to write. The person beside you has their test uncovered and their writing is gigantic. . . you also need this grade to get a scholarship.

When the reality of life hits, are we able to stand firm? Well, when Bre and I bought our home in Airdrie, we had to hire a home inspector. This guy went through every aspect of our house to ensure it was safe for us to live in. Then he took us around the house, showing us the areas that we needed to make fixes in order for our house to be safe. His inspection revealed that our deck was in severe need of repair, something we wouldn't have noticed straight away. In fact, when I rebuilt our deck, many of the pieces of wood just fell off when I lightly pulled it. These issues were revealed because I invited someone else to look at the foundation of our house.

Catch this today, while your desire might be to build a foundation on the rock, strong community will keep you on the rock during turbulent times.

This is something else that we will work hard to develop - we want to ensure that there is ample opportunity for each person to be involved in community. To ensure that each person is able to find their people and that they can be truly known.

**\*\*Keys Underscoring the end of the message\*\***

But, let me ask you a few questions this morning as we close, who have you invited into your life who is able to look at the foundation of your life? Another way to ask this question is "who is your community? Who are the people you call when you get a promotion or those you call if you lost a job? Those you call when you consider making a family decision although they aren't really family. Who knows you well enough to be aware when things are not going well and they have a place in your life where they are able to speak into your life? Who would know if you are watering down the rock and watering down what God said in His word?

Let's read the text again and then we'll pray.

Matthew 7:24–27 ESV

24 "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does 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 beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. 26 And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do 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 beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

Pray