

The Lord's First Parable

Adapted from a Sunday School Lesson

Lesson: Matthew 7:24-29

When the Lord lived on earth He taught many wonderful things. He taught us who He was—our Lord and our God. He taught us about heaven and the difference between good and evil. He taught us that we are to love one another. Yes, He was the greatest teacher of all time.

One day, a great crowd of people was following the Lord. He knew that they wanted Him to teach them and to heal them. He went up into a mountain and His disciples followed Him. Probably the multitude came up the mountain as well. When all the people were settled, the Lord began to teach them. What He taught then, we call the Sermon on the Mount.

He taught the people what real happiness is. He taught them to share what they had learned with others, and to obey His commandments. He took the old laws and gave them new meaning. He taught them of the sacredness of marriage. He told them that they should do good works quietly, without the hope of being praised by other people. He taught them how to pray—giving the Lord's prayer for the first time. He told people to store up treasures of good and true things in heaven, and not to worry about the riches of this world. He taught that we should not worry about food or clothes, for He will take care of everyone who believes in Him. He told the people to judge others in a kind way. He gave them the golden rule about treating others as you would like to be treated yourselves. Then He told them of the difference between good and evil and between heaven and hell—explaining that in order to go to heaven people must be willing to give up wrong and evil things and to do good things.

Yes, this Sermon on the Mount is filled with many important teachings. By taking these teachings to heart and living them, we will be blessed with a heavenly life now and forever.

Do you know how the Lord ended His sermon? He ended it by telling a story. The Lord told many such stories when He was on earth. We call these stories parables, and each one of them teaches us something important. Each of these parables has an inner meaning.

This was the first parable that the Lord told. In this parable, He said that anyone who listens to His teachings and obeys them is like a wise man who builds his house upon a rock. Now a rock is a very solid thing. It is strong and cannot be washed away by rains and floods—nor can it be blown away by wind. A house that is firmly built upon a big, solid rock is very hard to destroy, for it has a strong foundation.

In the parable, the Lord told of a wise man who built such a house upon a rock. When the storm came, with its rain and floods and wind, the house did not fall over or get wrecked because it was built upon a rock that could not be moved by flood or wind. The house of the wise man was safe.

But in the same parable the Lord also told of a foolish man who built his house upon the sands. This man is like a person who does not really listen to what the Lord teaches, nor does he obey the Lord. Instead he listens to what other people say is true and tries to please them. Such was the man in the parable who built his house upon the sand. When the storm came, with its rain and flood and wind, was that house safe? No, it wasn't. It fell—cracked and broken. Why? Because it was built upon sand that can be washed away. You see, sand is not a firm foundation at all because it is easily moved. Sand and a big rock are very different things. Which would you want to build your house on?

The parable is really teaching us about two kinds of people. The first kind are those wise people who want the Lord's truth. They want it not just to *learn* it, but also to *live* it. You see, they love the truth in the Lord's Word. Their ideas and thoughts, and also what they love, are based upon the truths of the Word. Whenever they aren't sure of something they try to see what the Word says about it and then obey it. They build the house of their mind upon the truth—the truth of the Word. Such people are wise—like the wise man of the parable who built a strong house upon the rock.

But some people are foolish. Instead of really listening to the Word, they put the opinions of other people first. They base their ideas, thoughts, and loves on worldly things. They rest their whole mind on such things. Worldly opinions shift and move about very easily, for no one person's ideas last very long. Such ideas are like sand that easily washes away. People like this are meant by the foolish man of the parable, who built his house upon the sand. When the rain, flood, and wind came that house fell and was destroyed.

Each parable that the Lord told can teach us something valuable for our own lives. What do we learn from this parable about the wise and foolish men and the houses they built? We learn that it is wise to build the house of our mind upon the truth of the Lord's Word, and it is foolish to build it upon our own opinions or upon the ideas of others. Only the Lord's Word is strong and firm enough to stand all the troubles that might come.

Each one of us will make a choice. Will we decide to build our minds upon the Word of the Lord? To do this, we must be willing to learn as much as we can from the Word—and not only learn it, but also do our best to obey it and let it live in us. Only then can we be like the wise man who built his house upon the rock.