

At the Crossroads

Matthew 7:7-29

April 24, 2016

There was a builder who was about to retire. His # 1 man had worked for him during most of his business life. They had been very successful together. The builder told his assistant, we will build one more house. I want it to be the most magnificent one we have built. They talked about plans, what to include, he wanted to spare no costs. In the midst of the building the owner had to leave town, for a number of months.

The assistant was in charge. He decided to cut some corners. To use some less expensive materials, to do things not quite as well. In most cases you couldn't really tell, but it wasn't quite as good. He didn't have to work quite as hard, or as long. The house was finished, the builder returned from his trip. As he was touring the house with his assistant, the owner said, "I wanted this to be the finest house that we had built together, because it is my gift to you." The assistant was crest fallen, he would have done a better job if he had known that it was for him.

Do we do our very best in the tasks that God assigns to us? What path do we choose to travel?

We make choices every day.

Upon what do we make those choices? What is it that guides our thoughts and our intentions?

Jesus has directed us over the past few weeks, as we have looked at some of the most influential, and personal thoughts about things that are important in the lives of Kingdom People. He described many qualities that are to be true about God's people in the Beatitudes.

He told us that Christ Followers are Salt and Light!

Last week we saw that three of our priorities are
Seek God with all that you have!
Trust God, Don't worry
Pursue Heavenly Treasures

Today we will learn how important our choices are.

We are going to learn that we choose what kind of foundation we build upon.
And we will learn about making a choice at the Crossroads of life that we come upon.

Jesus directs us to...

Build on a strong foundation Matthew 7:24-27 "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The 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. But 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. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

He tells of two builders:

1. They both saw the need of building a house.
2. They both resolved to build a house.
3. They were both skilled in building.
4. Both set out and finished their structures.

Looking only at the surface both of these men would be commended in their accomplishments. But we must be careful in commending people until they go through some testing.

What characterizes a wise builder?

He is one who listens carefully to instructions.
He is hard working and patient.

In a parallel passage in Luke 6:47-49 we read that the wise builder dug deep. "As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."

A wise builder will dig until he comes to the bedrock.

He will then build his house on that.

A wise builder is not looking for shortcuts or quick results. He builds to last, **and it takes time.**

A wise builder will carefully study Christ's instruction on how to build.

For these two houses, they looked much alike; the foolish builder may have thought that he was far ahead of the other builder. His house cost less, he got it done more quickly. He sat around and watched his neighbor continue to labor, while he took it easy.

Until..... Storms arrived

Storms come in all of our lives. **Are we ready?**

A. The rain descended (Pressure from above)

B. The winds blew (Pressure from around)

C. The floods came up (Pressure from below)

When the storms came - One builder failed the test

1. The foolish builder disregarded the Rock

2. He began to build too soon.

3. He began building when he should have been digging.

The house on the sand went - CRASH

The other house- It took more work, greater cost, **more commitment, and more time**

1. This builder believed in the Rock

2. He spared no trouble to get to the Rock.

a. He dug deep, until he found bedrock

He built on the strongest foundation

3. Those who are successful spiritually have a deep and solid foundation

The house on the rock, **STOOD FIRM**

The Life built on the Rock of Jesus Christ,

Takes more time to construct

Must use the best of materials

These are God's truths and His values

When the storms of life arrive, and they will

This life stands on a firm foundation.

It is not shaken

It does not fail

It stands firm

It serves its purpose.

How do we build on a solid foundation?

Vs. 24 "Everyone who hears these words of mine, and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock."

Knowing and Living in obedience to the truths and teachings of Jesus is the solid rock upon which to build our lives!

Jesus instructs us to Travel the correct road Matthew 7:13-14 “Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. 14 But small is the gate and narrow the road that leads to life, and only a few find it.”

In life we do often find ourselves at a crossroads.

How do we determine which road to travel?

Jesus describes two choices, **Two gates to enter, and two roads to travel.**
simple, **In God’s view, it is.**

It may not always seem that

There is a **Wide gate, with a broad road**

It is easy to find,
Many enter through it,
Many travel along,
It leads to destruction

This is a pretty easy ride, on this road you set your own moral and spiritual boundaries. You make the rules. “The gate is wide,” Jesus said. So wide that almost anything you want to bring with you will fit through it. A philosophy of life that says there is no god, or all spiritual roads lead to the same destination. Don’t want to give up any of your pet sins? No sweat, they’ll fit.

Once on the road, if you don’t like the relational guardrails, don’t care to observe the spiritual stop signs, prefer a moral speed limit of 150 instead of 75, then just move them, run them over or break them. Almost anything goes on the broad road where the ultimate standard is “follow your heart and be true to yourself.”

Sounds a lot like “everyone does it,” “do your own thing,” “If it feels good do it.” “What two consenting adults do...” “don’t judge.” In the book of Judges it says there came a time when “everyone did what was right in their own eyes.” That’s freedom, on the broad road. This road is very popular.

There is a **Small gate, with a narrow road**

Only a few find it
Not many enter in
A few travel along
It leads to life

May be a small gate, but thanks to God, it is not shut. The gate leads to the way, Jesus **“I am the way, the truth and the life, no one comes to the Father but through me.”** Some suggest that Jesus as the only way to God is pretty narrow, but it **is** a way. One where God took the initiative, and reached out to us. The gate is small, but it is there, and we can find it.

The road is narrow, it is not easy. We don’t make the rules. We are not under the law, we are under grace. We are **“saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ.”**

But we care about God’s rules, and His directions in our lives. We must work at finding and then staying on that road. To stay on this road, we must submit to God and to His rules, accept His moral and spiritual boundaries.

Travel along that narrow road is not easy. Our human nature pulls against it. The attacks of Satan pound against it. The busyness of life, the things of this world all assail against our keeping our feet on the narrow path.

Sometimes the difficult task can be the most beneficial in our lives. And that is the most true when we think about our walk with God, of traveling on the narrow path, of the crossroads that we encounter and the choices that we make.

Getting to the path is a challenge, but then to stay the course takes resolve, discipline, commitment and sacrifice on our part. It means that we set this relationship with God as the # 1 priority in our lives. So that when all sorts of temptations come along to veer from this path, we continue on.

We can combine these two ideas
A strong foundation
& traveling on the narrow road

We can better understand how Jesus wants us to live our lives.

What are the implications for your life today?
Is your life built on a weak or a strong foundation?
Are you living in a manner consistent with
God's truths and values?
Do you find yourself at a crossroads?
How will you choose your direction?
How will you determine your path to travel?

Evangelical Free of Bemidji is at a Crossroads. This is an opportunity for the new Pastor And the leaders of the church To set a course, to seek God's agenda To begin a new journey together

**Build on God's values, His agenda and His priorities,
Seek the narrow road, and travel God's way.**

The Road Less Traveled **By Robert Frost**

two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
and sorry I could not travel both,
and be one traveler, long I stood
and looked down one as far as I could,
to where it bent in the undergrowth.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
somewhere ages and ages hence
two roads diverged in a wood, and I
I took the road less traveled by
and that has made all the difference.

The road that we travel, does make a difference. Let's make the right choices, build on the correct foundation, and travel the right road.

This sermon was preached at the Evangelical Free Church of Bemidji
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