

Good morning family. This morning we are going to finish up our series on “Follow Jesus”. Today we will look at Matthew chapter 7: 15-29. For those who can, please rest on your feet as we read God’s word.

Matthew 7:15-29 (ESV)

The title of my message is “A Challenge to Obey”.

For the past seven weeks we have been in the series “Follow Jesus”. We have been going through Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount. Today we end our series by looking at the conclusion of Jesus’ sermon.

In Jesus’ summation he presents two contrasting positions:

1. The wise builders:
 - Hears the word (Jesus’ teaching)
 - He acts on what he hears.
 - He is stable (did not fall) and withstands the pressure of the final judgment.
 - His life is built upon a rock.
2. The foolish builders:
 - Hears the word (Jesus’ teaching)
 - He does not act on what he hears.
 - He is unstable (falls) and does not withstand the pressure of the final judgment.
 - His life is built upon sand.

Isn’t it incredible that there is only one difference between the two builders, and that difference leads them to two different paths. One path leads to eternal life with Christ while the other leads to eternal life without Christ.

You see, hearing the sermons (teachings) are not enough. It’s what you do with the sermons (teachings) after hearing them that matters. Jesus is saying that we cannot just listen to his words but we have to obey them. That is doing it!

Before I continue with the contrast, I have a word of caution:

WE MUST HAVE DISCERNMENT

Be very careful of the sermons (teachings) you hear. Christ gave us a warning about **false prophets (teachers)**. **He tells us the false prophets (teachers) comes in a disguise as being humble and having our best interest at heart, however they have ill intentions. They want to take advantage of us, use us for their gain by misleading us to follow them and not Christ.** Ask yourself if the sermons

(teachings) are Christ centered, are they sharing about God's grace. Are they challenging us not to be conformed to the ways of the world but to be renewed in our thinking? Are they challenging us to become selfless and not selfish? Are they encouraging us to illuminate Christ in our lives? Christ goes on to share with us that we will know them **by their fruits.**

I'm learning something, as I get older, I do things I desire to do and I do things for people I love. Why do I share this, I believe to obey Christ we have to have a desire to do.

Question: Where does this desire come from? LOVE!

Obedience flows from love and love creates a desire to surrender ones will for the will of the Father.

The religious teachers (Pharisees and the Sadducees) taught the legalistic way of obedience. They would say the only way to show you loved God was by keeping the commandments/laws. If you broke a commandment/law you didn't love God. The Pharisees and Sadducees believed obedience to God was just some external act where we strive to "do a right thing". As if obeying the law would somehow earn God's favor (the letter of the law)-(physical)

Then Jesus (Emanuel) comes on the scene and says, "If you love me, keep my commandments". (Spirit of the law) (Spiritual)

2 CORINTHIANS 3:6 (AMP)

⁶ HE HAS QUALIFIED US [MAKING US SUFFICIENT] AS MINISTERS OF A NEW COVENANT [OF SALVATION THROUGH CHRIST], NOT OF THE LETTER [OF A WRITTEN CODE] BUT OF THE SPIRIT; FOR THE LETTER [OF THE LAW] KILLS [BY REVEALING SIN AND DEMANDING OBEDIENCE], BUT THE SPIRIT GIVES LIFE.

Christ is saying to his followers, the obedience I am looking for from you emanates from a relationship of LOVE! It is internal, flowing from your heart. It flows out of desire, never guilt, or an outward performance of Pride (look at me, see what I did).

CHRIST IS INVITING EACH OF US TO OBEY HIM THROUGH FAITH AND THE LOVE WE HAVE FOR HIM, WHICH IS EMPOWERED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Does this mean we won't struggle, NO!

In verse 25 Jesus tells us we will have struggles in our lives. Death, the rebellious child, loss of a job, envy, family members turning their backs on us, financial challenges, lust, divorce, anger, sickness, diseases and so on. You know what your rains, floods, and winds are slamming against you. However, Christ gives us a promise, if we obey him. Our house (lives) will stand. Can you hear Jesus saying, Well done my good and faithful servant?

Can I share a story:

Two years ago I had the opportunity to go on a short-term mission trip with some wise builders. We were going to erect a playground. I thought this was going to be easy. Erecting a playground... how difficult could that be? Put up some bars on the foundation, place the swings and slides on the bars and we're done. Little did I know we were erecting the playground on a sand like surface, this was the existing foundation. We had to dig holes. Hear what I'm saying, I said dig holes, not drill holes. We didn't have the drilling equipment we had posthole diggers! The holes we had to dig were at least 3 feet deep and 3 feet wide. After digging the holes we had to mix concrete and pour the concrete approximately 18 inches down in the hole. Then we let the concrete sit overnight. Now we have the proper foundation to erect the playground. A lot of pain, blood, and sweat was left on that ground let me tell you.

That was A HOT TUB MOMENT! Can I get a hot tub? Nevertheless GOD DIDN'T PROVIDE a hot tub; that was a want not a need. BUT HE PROVIDED WHAT WE NEEDED, A LAKE with a cool breeze at the end of the day.

Because I went with these wise builders, they instructed me in what I needed to do, I listened and then I obeyed. Because I listened and obeyed the proper foundation was laid, the playground was erected and I am confident the playground will withstand any type of weather.

I must say, I did receive my PhD as well while I was there thank you very much. The PHD IS **PROFESSIONAL HOLE DIGGER!**

I share this story because we cannot build our lives on the sand (lovers of money, pride, jobs THE OLD MAN) (being conformed to this world) we have to dig THE OLD MAN up and pour the concrete (Gods word) into the holes (THE NEW MAN) so that the new can stand strong in Christ Jesus.

ROMANS 12: 2 (ESV)

12 ² DO NOT BE CONFORMED TO THIS WORLD,^[C] BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWAL OF YOUR MIND, THAT BY TESTING YOU MAY DISCERN WHAT IS THE WILL OF GOD, WHAT IS GOOD AND ACCEPTABLE AND PERFECT.^[D]

Christ is saying to his followers, we need a heart transplant so we can reflect him. Christ is not concerned with the external he is concerned with the internal (heart). He knows the external only reflects what is in the heart” (THE INTERNAL). The only way to reflect Jesus Christ is to renew our minds with God’s word and obey Christ.

MATTHEW 5:16 (ESV)

16 IN THE SAME WAY, LET YOUR LIGHT SHINE BEFORE OTHERS, SO THAT^[A] THEY MAY SEE YOUR GOOD WORKS AND GIVE GLORY TO YOUR FATHER WHO IS IN HEAVEN.

Thank you God, for allowing the light of Christ to shine a little brighter in your followers as we obey Christ. We look to be an influence for you while we are here on earth. We also look forward to that day when we see you and you say well done my good and faithful servant. Enter. Jesus this is the promise you give us because of our obedience.

Who is looking forward to that day when we stand before Jesus Christ so we can hear him say well done my good and faithful servant?

You don’t have to answer that

Before I close today I just want to take a few minutes to look at the other individual. You didn’t think I forgot about that foolish builder. We have to talk about that other builder because he listens to the word as well. He even built a house.

This builder reminds me of those that come to Christ in v 21-23

21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. 22 On that day many will say to me, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in

your name?' ²³ And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.

I ask myself, what is the difference between me, and the individuals in v. 21-23. Why does Christ make such an indictment against these individuals? **"I never knew you, depart from me you who practice lawlessness!"**

Man! They come to Christ reciting what they have done in Jesus's name. When you look at their resume it is impressive:

They prophesy, cast out demons, and do many miracles?

I'm going to be real: I want to do those things as well. Maybe some of you want to also and I'm sure some of you have. Now here is where the rubber meets the road sort of speak:

I ask myself, why do I want to do these things. Have you asked yourself why you want to or why you did it?

It's a matter of the heart! Remember I shared that obedience flows from Love! Desiring to do the will of God.

Prov 27:3 As a man thinks in his heart that is who he is.

What was the motive in their heart to prophecy, to cast out demons, and to do miracles? Was it for a pat on their back? Was it self-serving? Was it pride? Was it a look at me moment and not a look at what Jesus has done through me? Jesus called them evildoers, said they were lawless and filled with iniquity. It was all about them and not Jesus Christ. You say you did it in my name but it was only for show. It was because of pride and self-glory. Their heart wasn't right (pure) so they missed out on seeing God.

You see the foolish builder had a beautiful beachfront house with a great view of the ocean. Everyone who visited was in awe. However, that builder built his house on his own principles and beliefs. He refused to apply the instruction given by the author of life and he followed his own. v25 reads:

And the rains fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."

I would like to ask those who “Follow Jesus”:

Are we seeking first the kingdom of God and all of his righteousness? Are we humble in spirit? Are we peacemakers? Are our hearts pure towards Jesus Christ? Are we looking to be salt and light, that positive moral influence wherever we go? The things we do, are we looking for praise or are we thanking and praising God for the abilities? Are we seeking a more intimate relationship with Christ? Are we respecting Him, asking him to reign in our lives? Are we reading His word to nourish our souls? Are we receiving his forgiveness and forgiving others? You know, there is freedom in forgiveness. Are we treasuring Jesus Christ more than things here on this earth? Are we looking at ourselves and our faults first before we look at another person faults to find fault in them? Are we being empathic towards others and judging them from a position of humility for the purpose of restoration not condemnation? Are we hungering and thirsting after righteousness? Are we implementing (obeying) Jesus’ teaching in our lives?

This is Jesus challenging us to obey him? Obey him out of love for him.

Now to you who may have made that decision once to follow Jesus but now you are not, or to you who have never accepted Jesus.

Jesus is calling you. Will you answer? THIS ALTER IS OPEN FOR YOU

Jesus says:

Matthew 11:28-30 (ESV)

²⁸ Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”