

Building on the Rock

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Bible verses for study: Luke 6: 46-49, NKJV

But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do the things which I say? Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them, I will show you whom he is like: He is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently against that house, and could not shake it, for it was founded on the rock. But he who heard and did nothing is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream beat vehemently; and immediately it fell. And the ruin of that house was great.

1. Foolish and wise building practices

In this sermon Lord Jesus used a very commonly known principle of building on a solid foundation and made an analogy between construction and how to live. There are still many people living in stick-built homes in the low-level communities along the coastal areas of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana. Some counties have revised the building codes and now require new homes to be built in concrete/cement homes. But there are people down there holding onto the long tradition of building wooden homes with insufficient foundations in those low-level grounds and it is difficult to understand that such unwise building practices have not been rectified.

In 1958, when I was 11 years young, the typhoon 'Sarah' swept through the south coast of Korea and wreaked a huge havoc: Some 5,000 people either lost lives or wounded, 370,000 people experienced house destruction or severe damages, and the total damage was assessed to be \$100 million to then a very poor nation of South Korea. After this calamity the people of Korea resolved in unison never to allow another typhoon decimate the livelihood of so many people and inflict such a heavy damage to their nation. So, the construction culture of this country was changed drastically so that wooden structures have not been built except for historical preservation purposes and the code required stringent standards to ensure foundation and building materials can withstand the annual typhoons. We need to implement a similar dramatic building culture change in the U.S.

In this sermon Lord Jesus implies that a great disaster will come to all of us just as a great storm comes to homes built on weak foundation. The disaster He implies comes in the form of deaths and God's judgment. So, we ought to ask ourselves if the building we are building in this life will be strong enough to stand in the face of the great disaster to come. Lord Jesus teaches that if we come to Him, hear His words and do them, then our building will withstand the great storm.

The people of Israel in the OT era were living under the curse of a great disaster that had been prophesied by prophets. They were not faithful to God as their forefathers forsook God's command to be loyal to Him. They discarded the truth of God as if it was worn-out sandals and were living in low-down moral and ethical standards. Therefore, God warned them through His prophets that great disasters would come to them. In spite of such warnings, the people's hearts were seared and they did not obey God's voice or repent of their wrongdoings.

[Jeremiah 23:12] "Therefore their way shall be to them like slippery ways; In the darkness they shall be driven on, and fall in them; For I will bring disaster on them the year of their punishment," says the Lord.

[Daniel 9:12] And He has confirmed His words, which He spoke against us and against our judges who judged us, by bringing upon us a great disaster; for under the whole heaven such has never been done as what has been done to Jerusalem.

By the time the Son of God came to Israel as a human the people of Israel had experienced the disasters of total destruction of Jerusalem including the temple of God, loss of the nation's independence and expatriation of much of the people to Babylon and Assyria. Yet, when the Messiah announced Himself to the people, they did not repent or welcome Him as their Lord. Rather, the leaders of the people hated Him and sought to kill Him. This caused Lord Jesus to be heavily grieved over the hardness of their hearts in tears.

[Matt 23: 37-38] "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate;

Their rejection of their own Messiah caused God to plan another terrible disaster to Jerusalem. Lord Jesus prophesied of this calamity and forewarned the believers to flee when they would see the city surrounded by the

Roman military. This event occurred in AD 70, when over one million Jewish people were killed by the Roman military and the city was totally destroyed including the second temple built by Herod. The Christians in the city fled the city as instructed by their Savior and history tells us that no Christian was killed as a result of this calamity.

[Luke 21: 20-24] "But when you see Jerusalem surrounded by armies, then know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those who are in the midst of her depart, and let not those who are in the country enter her. For these are the days of vengeance, that all things which are written may be fulfilled. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! For there will be great distress in the land and wrath upon this people. And they will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led away captive into all nations. And Jerusalem will be trampled by Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

Nimrod, who was a great-grandson of Noah, was a mighty leader of the post-flood era who built numerous cities, established a kingdom that covered much of today's Syria and Iraq and became its king. He and his followers, unfortunately, did not honor God. For the purpose of reaching the heaven where God dwells, they started to build a large structure in the city of Babel. This magnificent tower structure had a massive foundation and rose high. As an act of hostility toward God, their soldiers shot arrows up toward heaven from the top of the tower. God saw their endeavor, the tower they built and their act of rebellion, and decided to confuse their language so that they could not communicate with one another. A great confusion came about and they scattered to different parts of the earth in groups. Although they planned methodically and employed the best construction techniques for their tower project, their endeavor came to nothing because they had no desire to honor and respect God through their project. We see in the human history repeated examples of people building great empires but for their own honor and glory and ending up in destruction time and time again.

[Genesis 11:4] And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth."

King Solomon built the first temple of God in Jerusalem as directed by his father king David using the massive amount of gold left by David and his own resources of substantial amount. The temple was heavily coated with pure gold and was dedicated in an elaborate ceremony as a place of worship for the people of Israel. However, due largely to the unfaithfulness of the people and their leaders God allowed the temple to be destroyed thoroughly in two occasions. Stephan, the first Christian martyr in the NT era, explained the reason as based on God's valuation of the temple as something far less than loyalty and faithfulness of the believers.

[Acts 7:47-50] But Solomon built Him a house. "However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: 'Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the Lord, or what is the place of My rest? Has My hand not made all these things?'

Although Solomon built an extremely grandiose temple of great splendor, the people's loyalty and faithfulness was far more valuable than the building to God who made heaven and earth and all things in them. Solomon wrote a wonderful Book of Proverbs but he failed to live them out. In his later years he served the idols of his many wives. In God's eyes Solomon's life was one of failure and disloyalty. Therefore, the grandiose temple was not a sweet-smelling offering before God. Lord Jesus criticized the glory of Solomon as something less than that of a simple lily in the field.

[Luke 12:27] Consider the lilies, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; and yet I say to you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

Lord Jesus speaks about an impending great flood that will destroy the buildings built on weak foundations. Bible teaches us what that great disaster will be to us. Bible tells us that there will be a great harvest of this world, when the good grains will be harvested and stored in the storehouse, but the chaff will be burned up. And the Bible also shows us what kinds of people constitute the chaff category of people at the time of God's harvest from this world. Regardless of how much wealth and what great positions we may have amassed in this life, if we are nothing but chaff in the eyes of the Lord of the Harvest in the final days, how sad will our ends be!

[Matt 3:12] His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather His wheat into the barn; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

[Revelation 21:7-8] He who overcomes [d]shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be My son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.

Far too many people are not building on the solid Rock of Jesus Christ. There is hardly any solid principles and moral standards in their lives. Many live on being swayed by the currents of this world, because they have not ushered in the truth of Jesus Christ as their Rock foundation for life building. In fact, many live on without any concept of building for a purpose, whatever that may be. They will unfortunately be burned up as chaff when the great harvest time comes.

2. Jesus Christ, the Rock of All Ages

The word, Rock, appears many times in both OT and NT. The rock that Lord Jesus speaks in this sermon actually refers to Himself. The rock figuratively speaks of the unchanging truth, security, and blessings of God. Moses and David confess that LORD Jehovah is their Rock.

[Deuteronomy 32:3-4] For I proclaim the name of the Lord: Ascribe greatness to our God. He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.

[Psalm 18:2] The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; My God, my strength, in whom I will trust; My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.

Apostle Paul declares that the rock, from which the people of Israel drank water while they were in the wilderness at the foot of Mt. Horeb, was a type of Jesus Christ. The rock that Moses and David confessed as “our Rock, my Rock” is Jesus Christ, the same as God the Jehovah.

[1 Corinthians 10:2-4] all were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea, all ate the same spiritual food, and all drank the same spiritual drink. For they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them, and that Rock was Christ.

To young David this rock meant a safe shelter from the threat of king Saul and his soldiers. David and his men sought refuge in deep rocky craigs and caves of Judea to avoid being hunted by Saul’s hunting party. That is why David sang of the LORD being his rock, fortress and deliverer. And these psalms carried a serious meaning of life and death reality to David. We can also find safety from the on-going COVID-19 in our Rock, Jesus Christ, and be restored and nourished so that we will transition into the eternal blessed kingdom of God when our life’s disaster of death comes upon us. There, our eternal place will not be shaken or moved because we will be safe in the Rock of All Ages.

[Psalm 31:2-3] Bow down Your ear to me, deliver me speedily; Be my rock of refuge, a fortress of defense to save me. For You are my rock and my fortress; Therefore, for Your name’s sake, lead me and guide me.

3. Building on the Rock

If we admit that Jesus Christ is the rock of our soul’s salvation, then how should we build on this rock? In verse 6: 47 of the sermon Lord Jesus likened “Whoever comes to Me, and hears My sayings and does them” as those who dig deep and build on the rock foundation. Based on this teaching, we need to do the following three things if we want to build on the solid foundation of our Rock, Jesus Christ:

First, we need to openly declare Jesus Christ as the Rock of our salvation, come to Him daily to adore, worship and listen to Him speaking to us so as to learn His truths and principles.

Secondly, we need to adopt the truths and principles of Jesus Christ as those for our own life, and pledge consciously to abide by them with all faithfulness.

Thirdly, we must keep and abide by the truths and principles, which are now MY soul’s principles, diligently and without regard to any sacrifices required.

If you practice the above three required acts, there will be strong assurance of salvation and living hope always in your soul and unwavering peace will pervade in the face of diverse difficulties. Your life will be fundamentally different from those who live being swayed left to right by the currents and false standards of the sinful and vain world around them. Do you see any such Christians around you? Then, observe carefully the remarkable differences between their lives and those of the other category. How about your own life? Are you building on the rock of Jesus Christ? Have you made His principles and standards as your own? And do you have the unspeakable joy of having this amazing Rock of Salvation in the center of your life? If you have not known this blessing, I strongly encourage you to start doing the three things above. God will bless your decision and endeavors. And the people around you will soon begin to observe that you are building your life on the Rock of Salvation for blessed eternity. Amen.