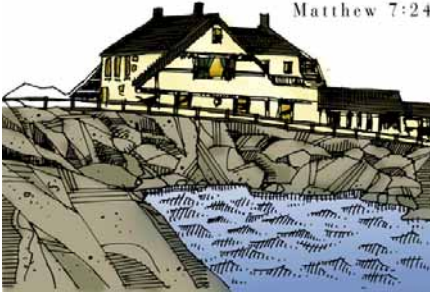


SHELTER AGAINST THE STORMS OF LIFE

Dr. Fred Fourie ~ Sunday, July 8, 2007

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.

Matthew 7:24



Matthew 7: 24 – 27 "Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell--and great was its fall!"

Yesterday was July 7, abbreviated as 07-07-07. Many people across the world celebrated this unique and so-called "lucky" date in many different ways. Some chose it as their wedding date, believing or hoping that the 7-7-7 would bring them happiness and "luck" Several years ago; a movement of enthusiasts formed a nonprofit organization. Their purpose was to organize a worldwide poll to revisit the list of the **Seven Wonders of the World** and to decide whether they still are the top seven or whether there are other structures more deserving of this honor. They selected sites according to a tally **of around 100 million votes** cast by people around the world ~ over the Internet and by cell phone text messages. They widely advertised and chose the 7-7-7 date to announce the outcome of this worldwide decision. Here is the result: 1. Brazil's Statue of Christ Redeemer; 2. Peru's Machu Picchu; 3. Mexico's Chichen Itza pyramid; 4. The Great Wall of China; 5. Jordan's Petra; 6. The Coliseum in Rome 7. India's Taj Mahal.

As diverse as these seven structures are ~ they share one essential feature! All seven of them were built for durability. Their foundations are constructed in solid rock. **They withstood the test of time!**

Not all world famous structures can possibly pass the test of durability. When workers began to renovate Theatre London in Ontario, they were **determined to save** the Theater's greatest glory, namely its splendid proscenium arch with its hand-painted murals of frolicking nymphs. During the project's early stages they discovered that one side of the arch was supported **by nothing, more than a broken brick, resting on loose sand**. Workers hastily erected a steel support and saved the arch from collapsing.

We can rest assured that, diverse as they are, each of these Seven Wonders of the World has a solid rock foundation. That is the reason why they withstood all tests of time. Jesus Christ, in concluding the magnificent Sermon on the Mount, stated that our lives, in order to be durable, must have a foundation as solid as rock. For simplicity, directness, and graphic power it is unmatched outside the teachings of Jesus. No one who has read the parable of the two houses will easily forget it.

We are building our very own building -- our lives! Jesus made a definite connection between the ground on which we build and the durability of what we build. The terrain on which you build determines the length of life of what you build.

The foundations of life consist of the ground upon which you build. **Either you build your life on rock or you build it on sand.** There is no other option given to us. In the first example, Jesus said that a wise man came and built a house on rock. He was a prudent man, an intelligent man. **It was not a solitary rock, not one small cluster of rocks, but a large cliff, a mountain.**

The Master storyteller then mentions another type of soil. **Sand!** Christ said, "And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. **This foolish builder thought, "I'll save time, I'll save money and I'll save energy in putting it right here where the ground is already flat."**

There are some sharp differences between these two builders. One of the builders, **the wise one**, looked and planned. He was determined to build in such a way that it would never become necessary to reconstruct his house. He was thinking of all the tomorrows to come. Surely, it did take more time to dig deep into that rock and build a foundation, but his work paid off in the end, and that was exactly what the wise builder had in mind.

The other one, the foolish builder, was living from day to day. "As long as it satisfies my needs for now, as long as it is good for the moment, I will not be bothered about the future." I am sure that he told his friends, **"Let's eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die!"**

Now look at these two houses. When finished, they appeared the same. Jesus did not tell us that one of them looked like a Jury-rigged contraption, a shack or a lean-to, while the other looked like a Mansion. From what we can tell, they both looked the same. The difference was in their foundation. **"Choice, not chance, determines human destiny."** The foundation on which we choose to build determines our future.

A life built on shaky soil will be an unstable life. **The foundations of life consist** of the ground upon which you build. Whether you are a teenager, an adult, or a senior citizen, you are always building a foundation.

The storms of life confront every human being. Jesus said that both the wise man and the foolish man were surprised by the suddenness of the storm. It matters not your **educational background, your place of position or prestige**, life's storms eventually confront all of us. You may be upper class, middle class, low class or no class. **Storms are no respecters of persons.**

Look at the intensity of the storm. "The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock." It sounds so familiar for many of us! At times, our lives are all but obliterated by the intensity of the storms that confront each one of us. We are not exempt from the storms of life. They are as much a part of life as breathing.

The stability of life depends upon its foundation. All the materials one uses in building are important, the brick, cinder block, wood, nails. However, the material is not as important as the foundation. That is comforting to me, because it tells me that the stability of my life does not rest on my weak physical frame but on the rock itself. The wise builder does not get the credit for his durable construction. The credit goes to the rock. The teachings of Christ ~ the truth of Christ ~ Christ Himself is the rock.

It is an awful moment when a seeking person begins to find that the props, the foundation on which it has blindly rested so long are rotten; when it begins to feel the nothingness of tradition, and in that horrible insecurity begins also to doubt whether there is anything to believe at all."

The rock is one of the biblical terms for Christ. The implication is obvious. His truth is the one foundation upon which we can build our lives. The one truth that is always true. It will never vary, never shift like the desert sands, it will remain the same, yesterday, today and forever!

Resting upon this foundation, we shall stand secure when the winds, and rains, and floods of error, of fear, and doubt, and self-reproach, beat upon us! In faith, we are standing on a rock. Even when we sometimes tremble on the rock, we know for sure that the rock will never, tremble under us.

"On Christ the solid rock I stand; all other ground is sinking sand."

AMEN