

J. W. Sperling - Tyler

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LaTARH

Sermon preached by our Pastor  
on Sunday Morning,  
December 2. 1973.

Lesson. Isaiah 28.

Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not; for it was founded upon a rock.

Matthew 7. vv. 24 & 25.

Our beloved and spiritual friends may have anticipated this subject from the Lesson. By these words and in the paragraph as recorded by the evangelist, the Lord completed His peerless, amazing Sermon on the Mount, and we see here He now makes application of them to those who listened to Him. We have been hearing the wondrous words proceeding from His lips: now we are looking at the other side of the subject; that is, the response or lack of response in the hearts of those who heard them. So here is discrimination in the contrast between the two types of hearers, and it is applicable to this congregation and to all congregations listening to the words of divine truth.

This is very solemn. How may it be briefly defined? There were those who had resting in them and permeating their spirits the sacred unction of the Holy Ghost. They were conscious of their condition as fallen creatures: they were solemnly aware of their sinnership. They knew something of their need, and hearing these sayings of Christ they proceeded by the same blessed Spirit to do them. This means of course, they were well aware of their need and of the amazing provision made in the New Covenant of grace, the glorious gospel promulgated by their blessed Lord. So living faith immediately did - what? What do you do? You have heard the gospel: what do you do about it? They dug deeply and built their house on this foundation, on the Rock. This is the work of faith by the Holy Ghost. They heard Christ: living faith came, and their souls built their

house on the rock. They did as He told them. Have you done that? Having heard His sayings they proceeded to do them. O the wonder of it! A solemn contrast is provided by those who heard His sayings in a superficial, cursory way. It was a formal thing, There was no solemn consciousness of their tremendous need of divine mercy, of their need of a Saviour, of the only true foundation.

I will try to dilate on this this morning if the Lord will. Therefore they heard but they neglected everything, and they were quite content to build their house on the sand. Sand is a symbol for what is completely unstable and insecure. All outside of Christ is unstable and insecure. This can be well summarised. Unless you are resting by faith on Christ you have got nothing but instability. How does that look in view of time and eternity? This is the trouble with the world. Nearly everything with man rests on<sup>is</sup> sand, so you see instability. Things disappear because there is no foundation. Men look to money, and to everything outside Christ: they have got nothing but sand. They have no deep sense, no true, living sense of need. It is therefore, a casual matter. They build their house on anything this world can afford, - on what is superficial, nominal, formal, with nothing of religion, - anything the earth affords; it is sand. Of course this is the scene before us now. Things grow up in a night and vanish in a night. Why? Because there is only sand beneath.

This is a very serious proposition, but you see it is glorious for me to make to you in the Name of God because it exhorts you to seek God, that you build your house on the Rock. Nothing will dislodge you: you have security and stability. This is how our blessed Lord finished His sermon, and how I address you and myself.

I will take a further step. I will try to develop the subject and get the concept of it all. What tremendous issues are before us! Why? Because we stand in an unique position in the creative power of God. We are His creatures, created originally in His image, and we have those things that make us unique. We have an immortal spirit and a marvellous mind. You have a trio, body, soul, and spirit, and we may render spirit as synonymous with mind. This means we are indestructible: we shall go on

living for ever. You cannot annihilate man. He does not cease to live when the breath leaves his lungs. When our Lord addressed those who had gone to the spirit world He addressed them as those who heard His voice. "Lazarus, come forth." (John 11.43.) Does not this overwhelm you, this concept of immortality? Therefore the issues are tremendous, both in relation to this phase of our existence and the great Beyond; Eternity; our ascent into Paradise, or our descent into the lake that burneth with fire. Think of the tremendous issues; and think; "I am alone." Earthly relationships the Lord has instituted for this time's state in a certain manner. But "in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." (Matt.22,30) Union in Christ is everlasting, but "I am alone. I cannot take a close relative, a parent, a child, husband, wife, son or daughter to stand with me before God. I must stand before God alone. Do I need a foundation? Nothing anyone can do or say or achieve will accomplish anything in relation ~~to~~ my standing before God. I cannot produce anything that will give me security and stability and standing before Him when I cross the threshold."

Are these things penetrating your spirit? As we had on Tuesday; "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." (Psa.24.1) The early Church recognised that they did not possess anything. "Neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own." (Acts 4.32) There is a recognition that not only am I alone, but I must soon leave all below. If I have £50,000 or £1,000, if I have a large wardrobe, soon all will be gone. I am alone before God. I must launch into Eternity; go before my Creator; leave all creatures and all I have below and stand before God. Do I need a foundation? ~~do~~ I need something to rest on that is secure? Answer! What is your foundation? Have you any?

I suggest something else to your minds. Being God's creatures, though sadly, totally fallen, there is a realisation that only God can satisfy us. It seems to me that, basic in creatureship there is a reaching forth for something. The majority do not know what it is. If you are born again this is identified. You need God, and no one else can satisfy you. None can fill up the vast desires of man but God your Creator, your Saviour. You must have God. Work it out on these lines. God, from the creation of

Adam and Eve has built up His own human race. It is God's race; God's human race. May the Lord remember them in the troubles round the world to day! None asked to come: none sought to be given a being. I pity the human race intensely.- My point was, God had His own chosen method of building up to its present enormous volume. His own method was the institution of marriage; and what security is there unless there is a good foundation in all basic things? This is the point: in God's institution of marriage and the family there is a foundation for something. A woman is rightly given to look for a considerable degree under God to her husband for stability and security, and likewise children from their parents. Where love obtains this obtains. The foundation of a family is laid in the home. Go on, and build up your lives round this foundation. It is wonderful to consider. It is all under God, but I am showing that God has built this into His institution.

I will go further. Whether people recognise it or not, the basic fact remains as we are given to understand, the first basic fear of a babe is a fear of falling. This is basic in your life. We sang at Robertsbridge concerning the babe lying passive in its mother's arms. (708) This is a foundation. We do not know the degree of knowledge and perception there is in a babe, but there is a recognition of a foundation. You say you grow up, and you may be seventy, eighty, ninety, or a hundred: you have still got that basic thing in you; you want a foundation and love and consideration and care and fidelity. A man may be seventy; he still needs it: a woman does, so there is a desire to have somewhere to rest.

I will develop this on another line. The human body rests largely on the fidelity of its main organ. You must have cardiac integrity, as it is called, or your whole life collapses. Integrity of all the principle organs is like a foundation for your living. If you take that away there is nothing left. Another foundation in society is integrity. If people have <sup>none</sup> governments none, business executives none and workers none, there is no foundation for anything. The same applies to currency. Unless there is a Bank of England to underwrite everything and stability there is nothing. What is it all worth? Thousands of pieces of paper are worthless.

There is a foundation for everything in God's economy. Let us concentrate by His grace on the only foundation.- What is this sandy sort of a foundation? There is just a formal religion; going to Church once, saying a few prayers, singing the hymns, and subscribing to charities; - very laudable on that level. It is like a sedative to the mind,- practising Christianity; so people think they will be all right. It is only sand. Some may take it to the extreme, as the Pharisee. He thanked God he was not as other men. He was very good on the moral plane, but <sup>char.</sup> will not do to rest one's soul on. He did not need anything: he was really correct. He fasted twice a week and gave tithes of all he possessed, and he did not need anything. He was quite satisfied with his religious attainments. It is sand. The same applies to Strict Baptists. If you say you have been an orthodox Strict Baptist, and you subscribe to all the traditions of Strict Baptists and you have never deviated and you have been a member for so many years, if there is nothing more it is nothing but sand. If you are not resting on Christ the solid Rock, it is only sand. So well look into this. I would constantly.

So there is orthodoxy and the traditions of men. There are two forms of traditions of men, and the tradition we have received is the gospel. The traditions of men are those things men have overlaid and developed in religious methods. God's tradition is the gospel, and if you rest on the traditions of men it is only sand. If you are pleased with self and rest on that,- I cannot, no! there is nothing to rest on. Bless God for His goodness, but do not rest on it. If you do, or if you say half a dozen ministers have put a hand on your shoulder and said what they thought of you, are you resting on that? If it is true it indicates a bond, but are you resting on it? If you are living in a religion of the flesh it is sand. You want to make a clear distinction and ask God to give you discernment. A child of God has a religion of the Spirit and of the flesh. If you are only resting in a religion of the flesh it is sand. I want to proclaim this before you.

Another word is self-righteousness, or spiritual pride. There is a lot of this. Alas! self-righteousness goes over the border and touches you relative to the religion of the Spirit. If it can really be defined,

"The heart uplifts with God's own gifts,  
And makes e'en grace a snare." (287)

This is an extreme word. It does not mean that saving grace is a snare: your wicked heart takes advantage of it. It is sand.

Another category is that of earth. "What will give me security? I must have a nominal part of religion and plenty of security in the world, - money, substance, treasure." It is nothing only sand. Ask yourself; "What foundation am I resting on for eternity?" Amen.