

21. Jesus Taught the Importance of the Right Foundation

In our last topic, we saw that we want to show our physical and spiritual children how to show the love of Jesus to those who treat us as enemies. As we show the love of Jesus to others, the Lord works in their hearts and many times uses that love to draw others to Himself. In our topic today, we are going to see that Jesus taught His disciples about the importance of building on the right foundation.

In Luke 6:39-42, we read, “And He spoke a parable to them: ‘Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone who is perfectly trained will be like his teacher. And why do you look at the speck in your brother's eye, but do not perceive the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, “Brother, let me remove the speck that is in your eye,” when you yourself do not see the plank that *is* in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck that is in your brother's eye.’” The word translated “blind” speaks about a person who is physically blind, mentally blind or spiritually blind. In this parable, Jesus used physical blindness to illustrate spiritual blindness.

Jesus was talking to His disciples about the importance of loving their enemies. The disciples viewed Jesus as their Teacher. Jesus had just made it plain to the disciples that they could not be spiritually blind and lead others. Instead, they needed to follow the example of their teacher. However, at the same time Jesus also gave them a promise about what would happen as they followed His example. The word translated “perfectly trained” means *to mend what is broken*, to strengthen, or to make complete. Hebrews 13:20-21 says, “Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom *be* glory forever and ever. Amen.” Here, we see that the word is translated “make complete”. Jesus promised the disciples that as they matured and followed His example, they would become like their Teacher. In the same way, as they loved their enemies they would lead them by example.

At the same time, Jesus explained to the disciples that they had to live what they taught. To illustrate His point, Jesus compared a tiny speck to a large piece of wood (a plank). He said that to be an effective example we must examine our own lives first. Many times, it is easy to see sins in the lives of others. At the same time, we may not even look at the sins in our own lives. Jesus compared the sins of others to the tiny speck and the sins in our own lives that we do not even notice to a large piece of wood. In order to help others, we need to first take the large piece of wood out of our own eye and then we will be able to see clearly to take the tiny speck out of the eye of a brother. Here, we see that Jesus made it clear that we need to always examine our own lives and correct those things that are sin before we try to correct others who have sins in their lives. Then, we will be able to help others instead of judge them.

Luke 6:43-45 says, “For a good tree does not bear bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. For every tree is known by its own fruit. For *men* do not gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather

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grapes from a bramble bush. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.” Jesus wanted His disciples to realize that they would produce people like themselves. If they were true disciples that followed Jesus, they would be like a good tree. If they were hypocrites or false teachers, they would be like a bad tree.

Jesus said that a good tree cannot bear bad fruit and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit. John the Baptist had said in Matthew 3:8, “Therefore bear fruits worthy of repentance.” Jesus here taught that those who had repented and were His true followers would bring forth good fruit. Those who had not repented would bring forth bad fruit. Jesus said in Matthew 7:15-17, “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles? Even so, every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.” Jesus said that a false prophet could never bear good fruit.

Jesus said that the fruit that a person bears shows the condition of the heart. Jeremiah 17:9 says, “The heart is deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked; Who can know it?” That is why Jesus said in Matthew 12:34-35, “Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.” Those who have an evil heart will speak evil. In contrast, those who have a good treasure in their heart (Jesus Christ) will speak good things. True followers of Jesus will practice Ephesians 4:15 because Jesus is in their heart. That verse says, “But, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head--Christ--.” As we learn to follow Jesus, we will learn to do two things. First, we will learn to speak the truth. Second, we will learn to speak the truth in love. In that way, we will become like our Teacher.

Whether a person is good or evil, Jesus taught His disciples that out of the abundance of each person's heart, that person will speak. The word that is translated “abundance” means *that in which a person delights or that which fills the heart*. James 3:14-15 says, “But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your hearts, do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but *is* earthly, sensual, demonic.” In contrast, 2 Timothy 2:22 says, “Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.” The self-seeking heart will both speak and do evil. In contrast, the person with a pure heart will speak and do the things that please God.

Luke 6:46-49 says, “But why do you call Me “Lord, Lord,” and do 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.” We saw, in this chapter, that Jesus was teaching His disciples. At the same time, there was a great crowd that had also gathered and was listening to Jesus as He

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taught His disciples.

As we have seen, Jesus spoke to address both those who were true followers and also those who were only curious about Jesus or even critical of Him. Now, Jesus gave a final message to all who were there, especially those who were just curious or even opposed to Jesus. Jesus began this final thought with a question, “But why do you call Me 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do the things which I say?” The word translated “Lord” means *the one to whom a person or thing belongs*. However, many of the people just use the word as a title. Here, Jesus made it clear that one who called Jesus, “Lord”, from His heart would also be obedient to the things that Jesus said.

Jesus showed what it actually meant to be a true disciple. One who is a true disciple of Jesus comes to Jesus, hears the sayings of Jesus and obeys them. Jesus explained what such a person is like. A true disciple is like a person that builds a house on a rock. Such a person makes a choice that requires action. First, the person must dig deep. Then, he must lay the foundation on the rock. However, there are also rewards when a house is built on a rock as the foundation. When the storm or the flood comes, the water can beat against the house but the flood will not even shake the house because that house has a solid foundation on the rock. In contrast, Jesus said that the person who only heard His Word and did nothing about it is like a person who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the flood came, the stream beat against that house and immediately that house fell. In fact, that house was totally ruined.

We see that Jesus explained that there is a great difference between a disciple and a person that is just religious. A person can be very religious and never come to Jesus. Such a person depends upon his own efforts to please God. Cain was such a person. He brought the fruit of his own efforts. In contrast, his brother Abel brought the sacrifice that God required as a covering for sin. God accepted the sacrifice of Abel and rejected the efforts of Cain.

Jesus began this sermon by talking about those who came to Him with a humble spirit, had a hunger for the kingdom of God, and came with an attitude of repentance. Such individuals built on the right foundation because Jesus was their foundation. Jesus said in John 10:10, “The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly.” Jesus came to give abundant life to all who will build their lives on Him. In contrast, Jesus warned that those who depended on their own efforts would be destroyed. We want to help our children learn to explain to others the importance of building on the right foundation. That will happen as they learn to explain why Jesus is the One foundation that gives life because He is the One who could and did pay the penalty for sin. May the Lord richly bless you as you help your children learn to explain how to build on that foundation.