

# The Two Foundations (Matt. 7:24-29)

## A Small Group Outline



### 1. Praise *(Purpose: To worship God)*

- What are you thankful for this week? *(let the group's secretary write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Song Service
  - Sing a few songs of praise to God

### 2. Pray *(Purpose: To carry each others' burdens and to seek the Lord)*

- What challenges did you have this week? *(write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)*
- Go into a season of prayer

### 3. Review *(Purpose: To learn accountability)*

- Tell us how it went with what you promised to do in last week's meeting? *(e.g. Who did your share your faith with this past week? Who did you minister to? How did actioning your I WILL STATEMENT go?)*
- *Where people have failed to fulfil what they said they would, do not be harsh with them but gently encourage them to try again in the coming week. Give them more support by phoning or joining them in the week.*

### 4. Give *(Purpose: To be good stewards of our monies)*

- This is the time to return tithes and offerings. If done electronically, kindly ensure that you get the bank account details of your local church from your treasurer. Don't forget to complete an envelope and to send the breakdown to him/her.

### 5. Discover *(Purpose: To learn to listen to God, and be obedient to His Word)*

#### • **Notes for the facilitator**

- Read *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessings (MB)*, pp. 147-152
- "The people had been deeply moved by the words of Christ [in the Sermon on the Mount]. The divine beauty of the principles of truth attracted them; and Christ's solemn warnings had come to them as the voice of the heart-searching God. His words had struck at the very root of their former ideas and opinions; to obey His teaching would require a change in all their habits of thought and action. It would bring them into collision with their religious teachers; for it would involve the overthrow of the whole structure which for generations the rabbis had been rearing. Therefore, while the hearts of the people responded to His words, few were ready to accept them as the guide of life" (MB 147).
- "Doing, not saying merely, is expected of the followers of Christ. It is through action that character is built" (MB 149)
- Vs 24: House - A metaphor for one's character
- Vs 24: Rock – Christ is the Rock on which Christians, and churches, should build (see Matt. 16:18)
  - Building on the Rock means: 1) Receiving Christ and having a faith relationship with Him, 2) Obeying His Word – see Isa 40:8; Matt. 24:35. In receiving the Word, we receive Christ.
- "Do you desire to become a follower of Christ, yet know not how to begin? Are you in darkness and know not how to find the light? Follow the light you have. Set your heart to obey what you do know of the word of God. His power, His very life, dwells in His word. As you receive the word in faith, it will give you power to obey. As you give heed to the light you have, greater light will come. You are building on God's word, and your character will be builded after the similitude of the character of Christ" (MB 150).

- Vs 25 & 27: Rain/floods/winds – Note that the storms came to both foundations. Building on the Rock does not help us to avoid the storms of life, but they help us to withstand them.
- Vs 26: Sand – building on self, one’s own efforts (MB 152), and upon human theories and inventions (DA 314) [*SDA Bible Commentary*]
- “But every building erected on other foundation than God's word will fall. He who, like the Jews in Christ's day, builds on the foundation of human ideas and opinions, of forms and ceremonies of man's invention, or on any works that he can do independently of the grace of Christ, is erecting his structure of character upon the shifting sand” (MB 150)
- The parallel of this passage is in Luke 6:47-49. Luke’s version tells us that the wise man dug deep (implying time, toil and difficulty in laying a proper foundation), while the foolish man did not dig at all. The foolish man was in a hurry, and took shortcuts. He did not think of the future. Similarly, in a spiritual sense foolish builders are interested in surface religion; they live for now rather than the future (*George Knight, Walking with Jesus on the Mount of Blessing*).
- Vs 27: Great was its fall: That is, the house experienced terrible ruin. What eternal ruin there will be to characters who have built on self, and not on Christ!!
- Vs 29: Taught as one who had authority: Whereas the scribes teaching style was: ‘so-and-so has said’, Jesus taught by saying ‘I say to you’ (*George Knight*)
- *Read Matt. 7:24-29. Preferably let one person read it. Let everyone then put down their Bibles and get the group to reconstruct the passage in their own words. This teaches the group to be careful in quotation Scripture correctly and to use it as the basis of their discussions.*
- **Discussion Questions** (*use only a few*). *The notes in italics after some of the questions below are for the facilitator, and not to be read out to the group.*
  - Why is it so difficult to apply God’s truth to our lives?
  - What are the things that distract us from digging deeper & founding our lives on bedrock?
  - How do the storms of life expose the foundations of our characters? Give a few practical examples.
  - Unpack what it means to build one’s life on Christ, the solid Rock?
  - What are some sandy foundations you have seen people build their lives on?
  - Why do you think Jesus said that the fall of the house built on sand was **great**.
  - Why do you think the people were ‘astonished’ / ‘amazed’ after hearing the Sermon on the Mount? What are the key lessons that stood out for you in this Sermon (Matt 5-7) that we have studied over the past few weeks? (*ask one question at a time*)
- **Application Questions** (*select a few depending on your time. One has to be the I WILL STATEMENT*)
  - On a scale of 1-10, with one being sand and 10 being rock, on what foundation do you think you currently building? Explain.
  - Share a time when it was challenging to obey the Word, i.e. challenging to build on the rock foundation?
  - What would you like to do this week, to encourage one person to build their lives on Jesus, and be obedient to His word?
  - I WILL STATEMENT: Formulate an I will statement in response to what you have discovered in the Word. Let the group’s secretary also record these in an A4 notebook. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to give their I WILL STATEMENT. You have to be specific. E.g. “I will endeavour, by God’s grace, to put into practise what I hear, starting in the area of healthful living (or entertainment / parenting / my marriage / etc.)”

## 6. Share (*Purpose: To be witnesses of our faith*)

- Do you have anyone you could share today’s lesson with this week? *Be specific.*

## 7. Closing prayer