

STORIES JESUS TOLD



A Tale of Two Builders

Sometimes it is the most simple of stories that can contain within them truth that is lifechanging. That is certainly true of the story we will explore together in this study. Jesus has been teaching his disciples as they sit on a mountain overlooking the sea of Galilee. As he draws to a close, he finishes with a story about a wise man and a foolish man. This story makes one simple point and if we grasp it, it will change our lives. Follow the simple instructions to discover more.

Matthew 4:23-5:2

²³ And he went throughout all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction among the people. ²⁴ So his fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought him all the sick, those afflicted with various diseases and pains, those oppressed by demons, those having seizures, and paralytics, and he healed them. ²⁵ And great crowds followed him from Galilee and the Decapolis, and from Jerusalem and Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

¹ Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him.

² And he opened his mouth and taught them.

Matthew 7:24-27

²⁴ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

READ Matthew 4:23-5:2. Mark Jesus and pronouns referring to Jesus with a

V23 Where is Jesus and what is he doing?

V24-25 What impact is his ministry having?

5:1-2 How does Jesus respond?

The next three chapters of Matthew’s Gospel are a record of all that Jesus taught as he sat on the mountain. As he finishes teaching, Jesus then tells a story.

READ Matthew 7:24-27. Mark “hears” with a

How are the two builders described?

What are they each doing?

What is different about the way each man builds his house?

V25/27 what happens to each of the houses? What is the same and what is different?

Why did one house survive and the other did not?

V24 / 26 What lesson is Jesus teaching through this story?

James 1:22-25

²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴ For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵ But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

V24 Looks - Strongs 2657 - to observe, to fix ones eyes upon

V25 Looks - Strongs 3879 - to look carefully into, to inspect curiously, to stoop and look in to bent forward

Psalms 1

¹ Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers; ² but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.

³ He is like a tree planted by streams of water that yields its fruit in its season, and its leaf does not wither. In all that he does, he prospers. ⁴ The wicked are not so, but are like chaff that the wind drives away.

⁵ Therefore the wicked will not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous;

⁶ for the LORD knows the way of the righteous, but the way of the wicked will perish.

Both of the builders in Jesus story heard the words of Jesus. What made the difference was that the wise man acted on what he heard. This laid a firm foundation for his life.

READ James 1:22-25. Mark "hearers" with a  and doers with a 

V22 What is James encouraging us to do?

If we do not do this, what are we guilty of?



V23 How does he describe someone who "hears" and does not "do"?

In what ways do you think the Bible is like a mirror?

Look at the meanings for the two uses of the word "Look" in v24 & v25. What is the difference?

V25 What is the outcome for the "doer"?

How does this passage in James ch1 relate to the story Jesus told about the two builders?

READ Psalm 1. Mark the man who is blessed with a  and mark the wicked with a 

V1&2 What does the blessed man delight to do?

V3 As a result how is he described? Note the detail.

V4 What is the contrast made with the wicked?

V5&6 What will be the ultimate outcome for each?

How does this passage confirm the lesson in Jesus' story about building a solid foundation for your life? What do we need to be doing to build secure foundations that will last?

1 Kings 17:8-16

⁸ Then the word of the LORD came to Elijah, ⁹“Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. Behold, I have commanded a widow there to feed you.” ¹⁰ So he arose and went to Zarephath. And when he came to the gate of the city, behold, a widow was there gathering sticks. And he called to her and said, “Bring me a little water in a vessel, that I may drink.” ¹¹ And as she was going to bring it, he called to her and said, “Bring me a morsel of bread in your hand.” ¹² And she said, “As the LORD your God lives, I have nothing baked, only a handful of flour in a jar and a little oil in a jug. And now I am gathering a couple of sticks that I may go in and prepare it for myself and my son, that we may eat it and die.” ¹³ And Elijah said to her, “Do not fear; go and do as you have said. But first make me a little cake of it and bring it to me, and afterward make something for yourself and your son. ¹⁴ For thus says the LORD, the God of Israel, ‘The jar of flour shall not be spent, and the jug of oil shall not be empty, until the day that the LORD sends rain upon the earth.’” ¹⁵ And she went and did as Elijah said. And she and he and her household ate for many days. ¹⁶ The jar of flour was not spent, neither did the jug of oil become empty, according to the word of the LORD that he spoke by Elijah.

What was it that this woman heard?


V9 - The Lord commanded her to feed the prophet.

V14 - The Lord promised her that she would not lack flour and oil if she acted on his command.

Based on His command and His promise she acted - and secured a firm foundation for herself, her son, and her household.

This widow was a wise builder.

We often believe that obedience means doing something daring or difficult. However that is not the case. Let's look at one woman who heard and obeyed, and laid a good foundation.

READ 1 Kings 17:8-11. Mark the widow with a rectangle 

V8-9 Where does God tell Elijah to go?

V9 What do we learn about the widow?

V10-11 Who does Elijah meet and what does he ask her to do?

How does this relate to what God has told him v9?

READ 1 Kings 17:12-14. Mark the widow as before.

V12 What is the widow's problem with obeying the Lord's command?

What was she planning to do?

V13 What does Elijah tell her to do? Note details.

V14 What promise does he give her from the Lord?

What choice must she make?

READ v15-16. Mark the widow as before.

V15 How does the widow respond?

V16 What was her experience as she obeyed?

How did hearing and obeying give this woman and her son a firm foundation?

How does this story relate to the story Jesus told about the two builders?