

Digging Deep

Luke 6:46-49

Introduction

Choice: You have a choice to make (e.g., “Would you rather”).

- Would you rather lose the ability to read or lose the ability to speak?
- Would you rather be covered in fur or covered in scales?
- Would you rather be forced to dance along or sing along every time you hear music?
- Would you rather only be able to use a fork or only be able to use a spoon?
- Would you rather always be 10 minutes late or always be 20 minutes early? I already know most of your answers 😊. I'd rather be 20 minutes early and sit in my car scrolling on my phone 😊.

“No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money” (Matt 6:24).

- “If you try to sit on two chairs, you will fall between them. For life, you must choose one chair.” In this choice between two things, we find a beautiful reality: you can only choose one, and by choosing one, you commit to *that one*. As you invest in your choice, its value grows in your heart and life. Choosing the right one matters (e.g., everyone worships but the thing you worship, is it sufficient to bear the weight of your worship?).
- If you follow the wrong guide, you end up lost. If you listen to the wrong teacher, you learn the wrong thing. It doesn't matter if you hit your target if you're aiming at the wrong target!

Two Builders: This week, we will examine two builders. We're looking at the foundation of our lives.

- The most famous poor foundation in the world is the Leaning Tower of Pisa in Italy. The tower began to sink after construction progressed to the third floor in 1178. Scientists travel yearly to measure the building's slow descent. They report that the 179-foot tower moves about one-twentieth of an inch a year. The tower threatens to fall onto the nearby restaurant (*ristorante*) where scientists now gather to discuss their findings. A clue: the word "Pisa" means "marshy land." Further, the foundation of the giant structure is only 10 feet deep! In May 2008, after the removal of another 70 metric tons of earth, engineers announced that the Tower had been stabilized such that it had stopped moving for the first time in its history. They stated it would be stable for at least 200 years. All because of a poor foundation!
- Compare this to the Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building (Dubai). It is more than half a mile high, and stands double the height of the Empire State Building. It accommodates 12,000 people and cost \$1.5 billion. It is the tallest man-made structure with the most floors, the highest and fastest elevator, etc. While most attention focuses on its height, perhaps more important is what lies buried beneath the building. Extending 164 feet deep lies 58,900 cubic yards of concrete weighing over 120,000 tons. It took a year just to build the foundation. Everything lasting and impressive (e.g., career, ministry,

marriage, etc.) is built on a deep and stable foundation. The foundation of your life matters. You cannot start wrong and expect to finish right.



Jesus Christ is the only secure foundation on which to build my life.

⁴⁶ “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you? ⁴⁷ Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸ he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great.”¹²

1. The Problem (vv. 46)

⁴⁶ “Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”

Lip Service: What good is it to call yourself a Christian and not do what “Christ” says? He’s not a slogan, but a Savior. A savior who calls us to take up our cross and follow him (Matt 16:24).

- What good is it to honor Jesus with the title Lord but not the position of Lord in your life? Esteem means nothing if it doesn’t result in obedience.
- It is the height of hypocrisy to say you believe in Jesus, yet not do what he says. It is the height of blasphemy to do something ‘in Jesus’ name’ contrary to his teaching and character.
 - Sunday Christians can quote the verses and sing the songs but cheat their way through school or business.
 - Crusades famously included many actions that were blatantly contrary to the teachings of Christ.
- For a lot of us, the problem isn’t that we need to know more about God, though knowing matters: “Your heart can’t love what your mind doesn’t know,” (Wilkin). For a lot of us, the problem is we aren’t obeying what we already know (e.g., know it’s wrong but...).  “Trust and Obey”  What good is it to esteem Jesus, to be a fan of Jesus, to call him Lord³ if we won’t simply do what he says? We need fewer fans of Jesus and more followers. We need fewer people cheering for team Jesus from the sidelines and more willing to get in the game. **We need less hype and more obedience.**

¹ ⁴⁶ Τί δέ με καλεῖτε, Κύριε κύριε, καὶ οὐ ποιεῖτε ἃ λέγω; ⁴⁷ πᾶς ὁ ἐρχόμενος πρὸς με καὶ ἀκούων μου τῶν λόγων καὶ ποιῶν αὐτούς, ὑποδείξω ὑμῖν τίνι ἐστὶν ὁμοίος· ⁴⁸ ὁμοίός ἐστιν ἀνθρώπῳ οἰκοδομοῦντι οἰκίαν ὡς ἔσκαψεν καὶ ἐβάθυνεν καὶ ἔθηκεν θεμέλιον ἐπὶ τὴν πέτραν· πλημμύρης δὲ γενομένης προσέρρηξεν ὁ ποταμὸς τὴν οἰκίαν ἐκείνην, καὶ οὐκ ἴσχυσεν σαλευθῆσαι αὐτὴν διὰ τὸ καλῶς οἰκοδομηθῆσαι αὐτήν. ⁴⁹ ὁ δὲ ἀκούσας καὶ μὴ ποιήσας ὁμοίός ἐστιν ἀνθρώπῳ οἰκοδομήσαντι οἰκίαν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν χωρὶς θεμελίου, ἣ προσέρρηξεν ὁ ποταμὸς, καὶ εὐθὺς συνέπεσεν καὶ ἐγένετο τὸ ῥῆγμα τῆς οἰκίας ἐκείνης μέγα (Lk 6:46–49)

² 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.” (Matt 7:24-27)

³ Lk 6:46, Matt 7:21-22

- Hear God's Word, do God's Word. You can't obey it if you don't hear it. But it does no good to hear it, if you won't obey it.
- The greatest way to undermine the authority of Scripture is to fail to obey what it says. "It does little good to revere the Bible if you don't know what it says and even less good to know what it says and not obey it." I don't know who you're supposed to marry or what college you should attend, but I do not God has clearly commanded you to love your neighbor, make disciples, share the gospel, be a committed part of a local church, pray without ceasing, carry the burdens of your brothers and sisters in Christ, etc.⁴

2. The Wise Builder (vv. 47-48)

⁴⁷ Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸ he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.

Location: In both Matthew and Luke's retelling of this illustration, they focus on the **location** (e.g., location, location, location). Where have you located your life? Is it built on the kingdom of God, the path of Jesus, the way of our Savior? Or are you building your life on the principles and paths of the world?

Depth: Luke provides additional emphasis to Matthew, not just focusing on the **location** but the **depth** (dug deep).

- This is reminiscent of Jesus' parable of the soils (Matt 13, Lk 8). Both the location (path) and the depth (rocky) impact your ability to grow.
 - This is even one of the reasons God allows us to **suffer**. The depth of your hope is produced in the trials of life. Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing (Jas 1:2-4). **Comfort** can be more of a **faith killer** than suffering. Grass: If you overwater, the roots stay near the surface and can't survive the heat (they need to grow deep).
- Construction project through a swamp, putting piling in but having to keep going to find the bottom.
 - Too often we've settled for shallow expression of faith that can't stand the storms of life. We've substituted **depth** for **hype**.
 - Hype loves a good worship service, depth lives the gospel the rest of the week.
 - Hype is attracted to emotional experiences, depth is committed to daily obedience.
 - Hype wants a quick fix, depth perseveres for the long haul.
 - Hype thrives in comfort, depth embraces suffering.

⁴ Lev 19:18, Matt 22:39, 28:19-20; Mk 16:15, Acts 1:8, Heb 10:24-25, 1 Cor 12:12-27, 1 Thess 5:17, Gal 6:2

- We are not interested in you “looking” good, but “being” good. Our goal is not surface modification but heart transformation. What matters is who you are under the mask (cf. “hypocrite”).
 - Dodge Challenger SRT Hellcat 750 horsepower, 3.7 second 0-60. It growls like a Lion (2 Fast, 2 Furious). Tesla Model S Plaid 1,020 horsepower, 1.99 0-60. Silent assassin. It’s not the sound you make but the power of your engine. What is the engine of your life? Is your faith simply noise to look good around other people or is the deep power that anchors you in the promises of God?
- A lot of us are building, even in the right area, but we haven’t dug down deep. Keep going until you hit that firm foundation.
 - Why do graves need to be 6 ft deep? We don’t need Fido digging up Aunt Mildred and running around with her arm.
 - Have you ever dug a hole? It seems so easy, but it is hard work (e.g., ditch digging, etc.). Digging down deep is hard but necessary work. You’ll hit a bunch of rocks (e.g., questions, doubts, etc.), you’ll get tired, and you’ll think you never will get to a firm foundation. But it’s there, **keep digging**.

Step 1 - Hear: ⁴⁷ Everyone who comes to me and hears my words You can’t love what you don’t know, and you can’t obey what you don’t hear. Following Jesus isn’t just a feeling or a vibe. The gospel includes content, truth, and reality. Following Jesus means not following other things. He is **the** way, so you can’t follow **other** ways. “My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me” (Jn 10:27).

- There are lots of reasons to read the Bible, at its core, it is the Word of God. It is where God speaks clearly and consistently. If you want to **hear** God then **read** your Bible. If you want to hear God speak audibly, then read your Bible out loud.⁵
- “Hearing” is not simply the biological activity of sound waves hitting your eardrums; it’s about truly listening and understanding with the intent to act on what is heard (e.g., my kids “hear” me but are not always “listening”).
- It takes a type of **sanctified imagination** to comprehend and envision the kingdom of God in the midst of the kingdom of this world. We are inundated by a way of being in this world that pushes away from the character of Jesus. If we are going to live like kingdom citizens, then we have to be able to really understand the kingdom, and everything about it is counterintuitive. We’re strangers and aliens. We belong to another kingdom. Our foundation is anchored in another land. Our roots are planted in another garden.
- In this sermon, Jesus is going to great lengths to give us a vision of his kingdom.
 - Some of us aren’t listening. You need to meditate on the gospel. Study the Scriptures. “Your heart can’t love what your mind doesn’t know” (Wilkin).

Step 2 - Do: and does them (cf. above, **hear** and **follow**). Not just *hear* but *hear and do*.

- The comparison is not between **hearing** and **not hearing** but between **hearing** and **doing**. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves (Jas 1:22). We **must** hear, but we can’t just hear. The call is to hear and obey (e.g., reading the

⁵ 2 Tim 3:16-17, Heb 4:12, 2 Pet 1:20-21

Lego instructions but never building the toy makes collector's toys valueless and misses their purpose).

- When Jesus gives a choice between a narrow and a broad path, it is a call to a specific kind of life. There is a narrow path of obedience if we are to follow Jesus.
- God is showing us the kingdom path, but he doesn't just want us to know the directions; he wants us to follow them.

Firm Foundation: When you build your life on Christ and his kingdom, you will be like someone who has a house with a **firm foundation**. It is secure against the flood waters of life. It doesn't keep suffering from coming, but it means your life won't crumble in the midst of suffering (Wissahickon stone house, 100 next year, rafters are thicker and denser).

- The rock is a place of safety and security.⁶ The path of Jesus is the only secure path.
- When you follow Jesus's path, you are secure during the storm. Building is difficult work. **Will your labor stand (e.g., OBX houses on the beach)?**
 - When you have no depth, you are a spiritual pushover. Any temptation, challenge, or difficulty can easily knock you down.
- Storms will come. "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world" (Jn 16:33).
- No one escapes the storms. Believe in God, or don't believe in God, and the storms come. You can try to get enough money to insulate yourself from it, but money can't insulate you from disease, depression, loneliness, etc. (e.g., Steve Jobs, Ted Turner, Robin Williams, Tom Brady, etc). You can try to insulate yourself with family or friends but, even the best friend is an insufficient savior. They will let you down or disappoint you. Despite Rick Astley's promise: Never gonna give you up / Never gonna let you down / Never gonna run around and desert you / Never gonna make you cry / Never gonna say goodbye / Never gonna tell a lie and hurt you. No one but Jesus can live up to that promise ("I will never leave you nor forsake you," Heb 13:5).
- "What then is [this] strength? It is living with security, not being easily overcome by any of life's terrors... What could be as good as this? For not even the [a king can give himself this]. But [the] one who pursues the way of excellence can have this stability... In the crashing surf of the present circumstances, such a one experiences a calm sea... [When] the storm is violent, the upheaval great and the temptations continual [such] a person is not shaken..." (Chrysostom, 4th c.).

3. The Foolish Builder (v. 49)

⁴⁹ But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."

Same, Same But Different: Before you jump too quickly to the differences, pay attention to the similarities between these two builders.

- **(1)** Both want to build a house. They have the same dream, the same desire, the same vision. **Everyone wants to build a life worth living, a life that's significant.** Everybody wants security, identity, and belonging.

⁶ Ps 27:1-6

- You're building a life. You want a life that you are proud of, a life that will stand the test of time. The story of these men is *our story*.
- **(2)** Both men heard the same wisdom. They both heard Jesus' words. They both went to the same seminary. They both had the same blueprint, but one put the information into action.
- **(3)** Only one obeyed.
 - "Confessions of faith without expressions of obedience do not guarantee salvation" (Quarles).
 - "It's much easier to walk an aisle than carry a cross" (Dever).
 - "Of course, for the diet to work you can't simply be a hearer, but a doer. Information alone is not transformative. Diets don't work without discipleship" (Vanhoozer).
 - Theology is the map, discipleship is the trip.
- **Everyone is a builder.** Are you a wise or a foolish builder? Everyone is a worshipper. Everyone is a believer. It's not **if** you build, worship, or believe, but **what** you build on, worship, and believe in.

Obedience: God has given us a blueprint. Will we obey? Or will we just build with whatever we want, wherever we want, however we want?

- "My experience is that learning to follow Jesus is mostly about unlearning to follow myself."
 - World: "Follow your heart." Jesus: "Follow me."
 - World: "Believe in yourself." Jesus: "Believe in me."
 - World: "Discover yourself." Jesus: "Deny yourself."
 - World: "Be true to you." Jesus: "Be true to me."
- We love freedom, we think freedom means no constraints and it will lead to joy. It's totally untrue. Real joy is enhanced by boundaries (e.g., rollercoaster, marriage, etc.). Do you want to build a beautiful amazing and creative house? Great! But you might also want to talk to an **architect** and an **engineer**. God's blueprint brings joy and life (e.g., stage building vs. house building; pretty isn't the same as secure).

Joy: It baffles me, how many people I talk to, who are unhappy, but refuse to obey the things that God says in his word.

- God says in his "presence there is fullness of joy" (Ps 16:11). Why do you think you can find it elsewhere? That is building your life on a shaky foundation. **When you seek in something else what can only be found in Christ you are building your life on an unstable foundation.**
- The false foundations of the world can't even hold your **present** joy, much less your **eternal** joy. What will stand on the day of judgment? When you stand before the Lord what will be valuable? When you die, will you wish you had more money, a better job title, or more education?
 - It doesn't hold up **now**, it definitely won't hold up **then**.
- Ignoring Jesus' teachings is foolish and leads to destruction.

- One of the insidious lies about sin is that it is a good thing that God is keeping you from (e.g., Serpent and Eve). God is against your sin because he is for you. He loves you so much that he hates the sin that will destroy you.
- If you stubbornly stick to your sin, God will not have to destroy your life, because you'll destroy it yourself (e.g., blood pressure, diabetes, obesity, etc.).

How Does This Happen: How do we hear and not do? There are different ways to disobey.

- **(1)** Reject the message of Jesus (e.g., irreligious, rebellious).
- **(2)** Mentally accept the message of Jesus but don't let it impact your life (e.g., religiosity).
 - The gospel cannot be segmented from any aspect of your life. It changes everything. The gospel doesn't just teach you how to **sing in church**; it affects how you **spend your money**. The gospel isn't just **eternal** fire insurance; it impacts what you love and value **today**. The gospel informs your **job, parenting, relationships, finances**, and everything else because **Jesus isn't just Lord of a Sunday worship service but of all people and all things in all places at all times**.
 - All of that is the fruit of the tree, the gospel is the root that produces such a thing. It is the foundation (to switch metaphors). Is your life deeply rooted in the transformative message of Jesus?
- The gospel is neither **religion** nor **irreligion**; it is something else altogether (HT Keller). **(1)** Religion makes law and moral obedience a means of salvation, **(2)** while irreligion makes you the definer of your own law. The gospel offers a different path, a path of grace, that transforms your heart to follow God's will out of love rather than obligation or self-interest.

Conclusion:

Jesus Christ is the only secure foundation on which to build my life. Jesus is our rock, our cornerstone, our unmoving anchor in every storm of life. He must be our foundation because everything else is like shifting sand. Only faith in Jesus will stand the test of time.

- The **foundation** is Jesus, our obedience is the act of **building**.

So What?:

- **(1)** What is the foundation of your life? You can't serve two masters. Inspect the foundation, and look in the crawl space.
 - What do you value and love? What do you turn to in moments of crisis? What is the anchor for your soul? Is it in your gospel identity or your external comfort?
- **(2)** Where has Jesus spoken but you have not obeyed?
 - Be hearers *and* doers. What command do you know that you have failed to do? I don't need to know more, I need to obey what I already know.
 - To hear God's clear commands and fail to follow them is foolish. It robs you of safety in the midst of the storm, joy in the midst of trial, and the guarantee of an eternal reward that awaits you in heaven.