

False Hope

by Chuck Smith

The sermon warns against the dangers of false hope and the importance of building on Jesus Christ for true salvation and eternal life.

Duration: 39:25

Scripture: Matthew 7:24

Topics: "False Idols", "Eternal Security"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of building our faith and security on Jesus Christ, the solid rock, rather than relying on untempered walls of false hope or deceptive beliefs. It warns against finding comfort in rituals, self-esteem, positive thinking, or worldly success, stressing the need for a genuine relationship with Christ for true salvation and eternal security.

Transcript

Now let's turn our Bibles to Psalm 62 for our scripture reading. I'll read the first, the odd-numbered verses. Pastor Brian will lead the congregation in the reading of the even-numbered verses as we go through Psalm 62.

Shall we stand for the Word of God? Truly, my soul waiteth upon God. From him cometh my salvation. He only is my rock and my salvation.

He is my defense. I shall not be greatly moved. How long will you imagine mischief against a man? You shall be slain, all of you, as a bowing wall shall you be and as a tottering fence.

They only consult to cast him down from his excellency. They delight in lies. They bless with their mouth, but they curse inwardly.

My soul, wait thou only upon God, for my expectation is from him. He only is my rock and my salvation. He is my defense.

I shall not be moved. And God is my salvation and my glory. The rock of my strength and my refuge is in God.

Trust in him at all times, ye people. Pour out your heart before him. God is a refuge for us.

Surely men of low degree are vanity and men of high degree are a lie. To be laid in the balance, they are altogether lighter than nothing. Trust not in oppression and become not vain in robbery.

If riches increase, set not your heart upon them. God has spoken once and twice, I've heard this, that power belongeth unto God. Also unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy, for thou renderest to every man according to his word.

Let's pray. Lord, we're so thankful that we can say with the psalmist that you are our defense. Lord, we trust in you.

And we thank you, Lord, that you are a strength and a help to those that put their trust in you, that we can feel secure, Lord, knowing that you are the rock of our defense. Now, Lord, as we turn to your word, we pray that your Holy Spirit will speak to our hearts through the word this day in Jesus' name. Amen.

You may be seated. Tonight, Pastor Skip will be taking us through chapters 13, 14, and 15 of the book of Ezekiel. So we encourage you to read it over this afternoon.

We trust that you've already read it. I make it a habit to read over the passages several times during the week. And then I go in to study this afternoon.

And Kay says, Honey, you're not speaking tonight. Skip's speaking. Why are you going in to study? I said, He might get sick.

I want to be prepared. But no, I just enjoy going through the word of God. And it's so enriching to us to be able to go through the word together.

And I would encourage you, be with us tonight at 7 o'clock as Pastor Skip continues in his outstanding exposition through the scriptures. We're enjoying it thoroughly. This morning, we'd like to draw your attention to the 13th chapter of Ezekiel.

We'll begin reading with verse 10. But Ezekiel, the Lord through Ezekiel, is rebuking here in chapter 13, the false prophets that are leading the people to a false sense of security. And there in verse 10, it says, Because, even because they have seduced my people, saying, Peace, and there was no peace, and one built up a wall, and lo, others daubed it with untempered mortar.

Say to them that daub it with untempered mortar, that it shall fall. There shall be an overflowing shower, and ye, O great hailstones, shall fall, and a stormy wind shall rend it. Lo, when the wall is fallen, shall it not be said unto you, Where is the daubing wherein you have daubed it? Therefore, thus saith the Lord God, I will even rend it with a stormy wind in my fury, and there shall be an overflowing shower in mine anger, and great hailstones in my fury to consume it.

And so will I break down the wall that you have daubed with untempered mortar, and I will bring it down to the ground, so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall, and ye shall be consumed in the midst thereof, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. So the Lord is speaking out against these false prophets who were comforting the people of Jerusalem, comforting them in their wickedness, saying, Peace, when in reality they were on the very brink of destruction. In a sense, they were building a wall for the people who were about to be destroyed, that the people might hide behind this wall and have a false hope of security and of safety.

It seems like these conditions prevail throughout history, where people are trying to find comfort and security hiding behind walls of untempered mortar. Back in the early 30s, before World War II, there was a group known as the Moral Rearmament. Their slogan was, every day and in every way, the world is getting better and better and better.

I had a grandmother who was into that rearmament thing, and when she would come to the house, she would call us, and she would sit in the rocking chair, and she would say, Now, children, every day and in every way, the world is getting better and better and better. Now, say that with grandma, and they thought by thinking good thoughts, by sending out these emanations, these positive thoughts, every day and in every way, the world is getting better and better and better. They thought that they could bring peace to the world.

Then Hitler began his conquest of Europe, and you didn't hear that model or slogan any longer, because we realized that we were plunged into one of the deadliest and bloodiest wars in the history of man. It was untempered mortar. The wall couldn't stand when the storms came.

But there are always those who are willing to build these walls for people to hide behind and try to find the security. They hope that others will come along and confirm their message, and thus the false prophets, building untempered walls and other false prophets coming and dobbing them with untempered mortar. The Lord said through Jeremiah the prophet, For they have healed the daughter of my people slightly, saying, Peace, peace, when there is no peace.

Now the people were in a state of confusion. Jeremiah and Ezekiel were saying, Jerusalem is going to be destroyed. God's judgment is going to come upon it.

They have turned away from God. They are living wicked lives, and God is going to allow the Babylonians to be His instrument of judgment to destroy Jerusalem. The false prophets were saying, Jerusalem is going to destroy the Babylonians.

We will defeat them. Those that have been taken captive to Babylon will soon be brought back to Jerusalem, for Jerusalem is going to win in this battle against Babylon. There will be peace in Jerusalem.

The people had to make a choice. Do we believe in the message of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, or do we believe these false prophets? Now they wanted to believe the false prophets. They liked that message of encouragement.

They liked that hope that was being offered to them of victory over the Babylonians, and thus they crowded around the false prophets. They listened to them eagerly while they put Jeremiah in prison and closed their ears to the true prophets of God. Today we do find that there are still those who are building untempered walls and daubing it with untempered mortar.

Walls behind which people are seeking security, but walls that, as the Lord said, will fail in the day when God's judgment comes. When the storms of judgment arrive, these walls will not stand. The true servant of God dare not preach a comforting message to those who are living in sin.

We must always warn them of the danger and the disaster that sin will bring into their lives, and we dare not offer hope and comfort to those living in sin. We do have good tidings for those who will repent and turn to Jesus Christ, for the blood of Jesus Christ will cleanse a man from all sin, and there is forgiveness with God. But you must repent, and you must turn to God, and He will provide for you a strong wall of

defense.

But we must always warn of the dire consequences if you continue in your sin. So our text speaks of a wall. Every man seeks to find a place of security, a defense, and some wall, no matter how weak and tottering it might be, they want something to hide behind.

One of the walls that men are building is that wall of morality that leads to spiritual apathy. They are not really bad or evil people. They are good neighbors.

Their kids are in little league and on the soccer teams. They have backyard barbecues. They have a savings program all set up so that when their children get of college age, they'll be able to put them through college because they want their children to be successful.

They want the best for their children. They are caring family people. However, they take little or no thought for their children's eternal destiny.

They want them to be successful in this world, but they really are not concerned about them being prepared for the other world that shall come. Jesus asked a very thought provoking question. He said, but what should it profit a man if he would gain the whole world and lose his own soul? If you truly love your child, your chief concern would be where will they spend eternity? And you would be intensely interested in their eternal welfare.

But many people find more pleasure in taking their kids to Disneyland than they do to Sunday school. And in preparation for Disneyland, they're talking about, oh, all of the things you're going to see, the rides you're going to be going on. And there's all kinds of enthusiasm.

And the kids are whipped up into a state of enthusiasm. But come Sunday morning, well, it's the only day we can really sleep in. And so they neglect the children and their Christian education.

And though they are good people, there are moral people, yet the wall behind which they are trying to hide. I'm a good person. I'm a moral person.

I'm honest. I do my best to keep the golden rule. Those things will not get you into heaven.

You can be a good, honest, moral person and end in hell. That is a untempered wall morality. It will not save you.

It will not stand when the real storms come. Every year, men in this church demonstrate that watching the Super Bowl is more important to them than their own spiritual growth and welfare, drawing closer to God. Yet, they do attend church on a regular basis.

But the wall behind which they are seeking to hide is untempered. Jesus desires that he be the most important thing in your life. He said, the greatest commandment is thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength.

He doesn't want to be second fiddle. He doesn't want to have a secondary place of importance in your life. He wants to have the first place, Christ preeminent.

And it is so important that he be preeminent in our lives, that the wall that we have found shelter and security in will withstand the storms that surely will come. If you go past South Coast Plaza on your way

from church today, you'll see the parking lot full of cars as thousands of people are there in the mall this Sunday. They have no real concern about their eternal destiny.

They have no concern for the blood of Jesus Christ that was shed for their sins, or the power of the Holy Spirit to help us to live a committed life. They're too absorbed in their worship of mammon. They hope to find some trinket to wear around their neck at a 50% discount price, or some cosmetic to make them more attractive.

But the things that are eternal have little care or concern for them. Another wall that is really more deceptive is that wall of spiritual ritualism, because people go through certain spiritual rituals. Many are hiding behind the wall, trusting in the fact that when they were an infant, their parents took them to church where they were christened.

And because they were baptized when they were little babies, they are trusting in that wall for their salvation. Oh, they don't really walk with Jesus Christ. They rarely crack the Bible open, if ever.

And they hope that when they are dying, and perhaps in a coma, that the priest will come and perform the last rites, and that they will then, as a result, make it safely into the kingdom of God. That is an untempered wall. And there are those who are dobbing it, encouraging the people, dobbing it with untempered mortar.

But the Lord said, the storms are going to come. The rain is going to beat on that wall, and that wall will fall, because it was built of untempered mortar. It is interesting, there's probably only two times in their life where they are really involved with the church, maybe three.

They get married there. They, when they're an infant and don't know what's happening, and when they're in a coma and dying, and they don't know what's happening, but yet they're trusting in that, to bring them salvation, rather than trusting in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, and a relationship with him, which is necessary for eternal life. Did not God say, incense is an abomination unto me.

I hate your new moons and your feast. In other words, God is saying empty rituals will never make it. He's not interested in them, but he's looking for a heart that is truly dedicated to him.

There are other religious walls that people seek to hide behind, that also are made of untempered mortar. The wall of self-esteem. The message that the main goal of the church is to help you feel good about yourself.

All of the self-esteem in the world will never get you into heaven. That is certainly a different gospel than we have in the Bible. For Paul said, the gospel that I preach, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.

That we through his blood might have the forgiveness of our sins. Then there is that gospel of the power of good thoughts. Discovering the power that is in you, that can be released when you start thinking positive thoughts.

All you have to have is a positive attitude. Write down your goals. Visualize yourself as having attained the goals.

Visualize yourself enjoying all of those things that you'll be able to have when you achieve the goals that you have. See yourself in that lovely mansion. See yourself there at the controls of your yacht.

Visualize success and success will come. There may be power in this gospel to help you become successful, but there is no power in that gospel to grant you the forgiveness of your sins. You may be able to gain the bragging rights of being the most successful person in hell, or the richest man in hell.

I'll gladly give those bragging rights to someone else. I would rather have the bragging rights of being the poorest sinner in heaven than the richest man in hell. For again, what would it profit a man if he would gain the whole world, but lose his own soul? Then there is the untempered wall of skepticism.

They say that there is no God. The Bible is just a myth. The universe, the vast universe with its billions of galaxies made up of billions of stars, came into existence billions of years ago when a small matter of energy, the size of a dry bee, exploded.

And from that explosion came this whole vast universe in which we presently dwell. This big bang. And that in one of these galaxies, down in one of the lower corners of that galaxy, there was a medium-sized star that threw off gases that became planets, cooled off and orbited that medium-sized star.

And on one of these planets, one day lightning hit a mud puddle, and somehow there was a reaction and the first cell came to life as a result of that lightning strike on that mud puddle. That cell over millions of years mutated, developed into different species of life forms. And one of these life forms went through a zoo and it turned out to be you.

And here you are with all of your marvelous capacities to think, to see, to hear. All of the capacities of the digestive system, the blood flowing through your body, taking the elements to the various cells and keeping them alive, bringing the oxygen. All of that just happened through a long series of fortuitous occurrences of accidental circumstances.

There's really no design, there's really no engineering of your human body, but have you ever thought of how marvelous the body is? It can transfer potatoes into ideas. You eat the potatoes, goes into your bloodstream, carries nutrients to your brain, your ideas, your thoughts. How marvelous.

And people say, well, it just, you know, just happened. That's the way it is. And they talk like they are the only wise people in the world.

And a person who believes in an all-wise Creator God is a gullible, unscientific fool. And they pass off their idiotic theories as science. And others come along and they daub the untempered wall with untempered mortar so that they build this wall and they try to pass it off as something that you can rely upon, something that you can put your faith in, because this is science.

And they scoff at Jesus Christ and the sacrifice that he made in order that we might have the forgiveness of our sins. As Paul described them, professing themselves to be wise, they actually became fools as they worshiped and served the creation rather than the Creator. But as Ezekiel points out, one builds the wall and then others come along to temper that wall with untempered mortar.

The false prophet utters his nonsense and others come along to confirm that it is really sense. And they temper that untempered wall with untempered mortar. And as the result of their creating this wall, there are those people that like what they hear.

And thus they come along and they try to find shelter in that wall. They have a popular message. It appeals to people.

It doesn't call you for what you are, a sinner, but it assures you that everything is going to be all right. Just set your goals. Take a positive attitude.

It really doesn't matter what the Bible has to say. You are great and you are wonderful and God loves you. Others come along, they temper the wall.

But these who have created it, they begin to have success. People come to find shelter behind the wall. And so they have seminars.

And they teach others how to build these same kinds of untempered walls. Because actually they're quite easy to build and they go up rather fast because they are made of untempered mortar. The tragedy is that people are hoping to find safety and security behind these walls.

And they are hoping in an empty hope. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood, His righteousness. I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but wholly lean on Jesus' name.

God says concerning these walls, they shall fall. Three times over in the text, God affirms that these untempered walls will not be able to withstand the storms that are coming, the storms that God will send. And unless your wall is firmly built on Jesus Christ, it will surely fall.

If your wall is built upon Peter or any other man, that wall will fall. Paul wrote, for other foundations can no man lay than that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ. On Christ the solid rock I stand.

But if your wall is built on some principle, it will fall when the real tests come. Positive thinking, possibility thinking, positive confessions, having purpose-driven goals. These are walls of untempered mortar and they will collapse in the storm.

Jesus gave a parable and I think he was probably thinking of this prophecy of Ezekiel, because it comes at the end of the Sermon on the Mount where he is warning about the false prophets who will come in sheep's clothing, but in reality are wolves. And in context, he talks about two houses that were built. The one man dug deep, he laid the foundation upon a rock.

The other man built his house upon the sand. The rain came, the wind blew, the floods rose. The house that was built upon the rock withstood the storm.

But the house that was built upon the sand was washed away, and great, Jesus said, was the fall of it. We are told that the wall will fall and that the foundation will be exposed to be sand. Interesting, when you look at untempered mortar, what is it? It is mortar that has too much sand in it.

There's not enough cement to cause it to truly harden and be strong, but it is a sandy mortar and it will not withstand when the real storms come. Beware of any wall that is founded upon some principle and not founded upon Jesus Christ himself. In verse 14, God declared concerning the untempered wall, so I will break down the wall that you have daubed with the untempered mortar.

I will bring it down to the ground so that the foundation thereof shall be discovered, and it shall fall. It doesn't talk about if it falls, it just says it's going to fall, and you shall be consumed in the midst of it. It will not hold up when that day comes, when you have to stand before God.

There is only one place that you want to be when you stand before God, and that is in Christ Jesus. A while back, I met a man who was in my high school department years ago when I was pastoring in Huntington Beach, and we saw each other in the store, and we said hi, and he said, well Chuck, I'm not a Christian anymore. I'm a Mormon now, and I said, oh what a shame, and he bristled.

He said, what's wrong with that? I said, well you know it used to be you would tell people that you were a Christian, and you were identifying your faith with Jesus Christ. Now you tell people you're a Mormon, and you're identifying your faith with the teachings of Joseph Smith. I would hate to set Jesus Christ aside, and identify with Joseph Smith instead of with Jesus Christ.

I think that's a tragedy. I said, um, Pon, what do you base now your hope for eternal life? You used to base it upon your faith in Jesus Christ that he died for your sins. What do you base it upon now? He said, oh, I base it upon my faith in Jesus Christ, and my continued membership in the Mormon church, but today there's a wall.

You're behind that wall. You're trusting in that wall for your safety and security. I want to know what is it? On what do you base your hope for eternal life today? That you have a positive attitude, a strong self-reliance, that you are able by your positive thinking to bring to pass the things that you need in life.

Do you think that will bring you eternal life? Is that the wall behind which you stand? Oh, I went through church rituals. I partake of the sacraments. Is that the wall that you're trusting in? Or are you trusting in Jesus Christ? The only wall that will sustain and keep you when that storm comes.

As Jude said, now unto him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory. I rest in Jesus Christ. He is the solid rock upon which I stand.

He is the strong wall in which I find refuge, security, and strength. And you dare not trust the sweetest frame, but must wholly lean on Jesus name. Father, we thank you for that solid rock, Christ Jesus.

We thank you, Lord, for the solid wall that he is for us. And that we find our place of security and our hope is built on nothing less than his blood, his righteousness. And Lord, we pray for those today who have put their trust and their faith in untempered walls.

For we know, Lord, that the day is coming in which the storms will rise. The day is coming when one day we'll face death. And at that time it'll be so important upon the wall that we are looking to for our security and our strength.

May we find Lord in you. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

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