

# Building Your Life On A Solid Foundation

by Zac Poonen

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**Scripture:** Matthew 11:25, Matthew 16:13, Luke 14:25, Matthew 5:3, Matthew 5:20

**Topics:** "Humility", "Internal Righteousness"

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## Description

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## Transcript

I want to turn first of all to a verse in Matthew chapter 11. See this is because among God's people there are those who are very highly educated who can be wholehearted disciples of Christ and there are some who are very uneducated who can also be wholehearted disciples of Christ. In India we have both extremes of people.

We have PhDs in our church and we have in some of our churches people who have never finished high school and some who can't even read alright. So it's been a great privilege for me to speak to both these groups of people and to see how all of them can be wholehearted followers of Jesus. People who can't read the Bible, somebody else has got to read it to them.

And remember for 1,400 years of Christianity they never had a Bible like this. Nobody. The first printed Bible was in the late 1400s.

Why did God not allow printing to be discovered before Christ was born? Wouldn't it have been a tremendous...God could have done it. What he did 1,400 years later he could have done it earlier. Wouldn't it have been a tremendous advantage if from the day of Pentecost onwards everybody had a Bible? But that's taught me something.

That the most important thing in the Christian life, though the Bible is very valuable, is not to have a Bible in our home. That is very valuable but it is not the most important. Because if it were the most important, God would have allowed printing to be discovered before Christ was born so that every Christian from day one would have a Bible in their home.

But what the Lord taught through his apostles was that the most important thing that Christians need is to be filled with the Holy Spirit. And very often the more educated we are, the more we think that if we can read the Bible and understand it and explain it, we will be spiritual and we will please God more. I'm not against studying the Bible.

From the time I was converted I spent the first seven years studying the Bible thoroughly and all my knowledge of Scripture is almost based on those first seven years when I went through it thoroughly with every type of help I could get. But I've discovered through the years that it's the illumination and revelation of the Holy Spirit that makes everything living to us. So Matthew chapter 11 verse 25, Jesus said, I thank you Father Lord of heaven and earth.

You have hidden these things, that is the real spiritual values, have been hidden from the wise and the intelligent and revealed to babes, not even grown-up uneducated people, but to babies who have never been to school. The important word there is revealed. Revealed is a word which is not found in the Old Testament.

The Old Testament you did not need revelation to understand God's will. You just needed to have a good mind and study the law and you'd know God's will. But in the New Testament a good mind and study will not help you to know God's will because God reveals his truth.

It's by revelation. Later on if you turn to Matthew 16 you find that when Jesus asked who do people say that I am in verse 13, Matthew 16 verse 13, who do people say that I am? And they said some say John the Baptist, some Elijah. Now there were very very great scholars in Israel and Jesus never chose any of them to be his disciples.

And those scholars thought that Jesus was Elijah. Oh well that's a good thing. At least I thought he was one of the prophets or Jeremiah.

But Peter said and Jesus asked who do you say and Peter said you are the Messiah. Christ means Messiah, the Son of the Living God. And Jesus said Simon you're very blessed.

Why was Simon blessed? Because he understood what all the clever PhDs of his time did not understand. He was just a fisherman. He never went to college.

Because human understanding, flesh and blood did not reveal. There again you see that word reveal. He did not reveal this to you.

It didn't come to you by understanding Simon Peter. Because if it comes by understanding those other 60 year old Pharisees would know it much better than you or quicker than you. But my father revealed it to you.

Now Simon Peter was not a baby. He was an expert fisherman. But when it came to revelation he was like a baby.

And that's why the father revealed to him things which clever people in Israel did not understand. Now why do I say this? Because most of us here in this church are clever. Now if I were speaking in one of the poor villages in India like I've often done, we don't need to speak about this so much.

Because they are uneducated people. They read the scriptures and they can't figure out what the original meaning is in the Greek or the Hebrew. They don't even know it was written in Greek and Hebrew.

They just read the Bible in there and they don't have so many translations like we have Living Bible, Message Bible and all that. They got one translation in their language. And sometimes those translations are not accurately translated either.

They are much more dependent on revelation. And we who are educated should not think that we can understand the Bible by looking at the various versions and studying various aspects of these words and root meanings and all that. Brothers and sisters, we need revelation.

That's what will change our life. Revelation is where I may not be able to explain a verse like some intellectual can. But it changes my life.

I may not be able to preach a sermon on a particular theme. But it changes my life. Revelation always changes your life.

Study of the Bible does not change person's life. It sometimes puffs him up with the knowledge of the Bible. He can preach.

He can get honor. He can make money. But it doesn't change his life.

It doesn't make him love his wife like Christ loved the church. It doesn't make him a servant of others wanting to wash people's feet. It exalts him to be a leader.

Look at all the great preachers in the world. They are not people who wash people's feet. They make money through their preaching and their ability.

They don't emphasize revelation. There are many ways in which CFC in our churches is different from many other churches. We don't claim to be better than anybody.

We've got hypocrites in our churches just like every church has. But there are certain things we emphasize which are not emphasized in many churches. One is revelation.

Jesus spoke so much about it. And when Jesus said this to Simon, he also said, verse 18, it's Matthew 16, 18, on this rock, and this is where the Roman Catholics have got it wrong. They think Peter is the rock.

He's not the rock. Jesus said, you're Peter. But on this revelation that you got just now, on this rock of revelation, I will build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.

So I see from that verse that revelation is needed to build the church. All of us need to see the revealed Christ revealed to us by the Holy Spirit, not just what we read in the Bible. What you read in the Bible is that Jesus healed the sick.

He loved lepers and poor people and we can see all that and try to follow it. And a lot of people who try to follow that very often live in a lot of sin. And they continue to go to church and imagine that they're very

spiritual because they know a lot of the Bible.

But revelation will humble a man. He will realize that the most important thing in the Christian life is not to know the Bible. The most important thing in the Christian life is to love Jesus with all our hearts, even if we don't know the Bible.

When we started CFC first, 47 years ago, the Lord led us to study two passages of Scripture, particularly right at the beginning, because we found that those were the two passages of Scripture that were not sufficiently emphasized in the rest of Christendom. And even today I see those two passages are not sufficiently emphasized in much of Christendom and yet they are fundamental passages for building the church and for living a godly life. The first was Luke chapter 14, and that is the conditions of discipleship.

There were two great commissions that Jesus gave. One was going to all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, Mark 16, and the other was in Matthew 28 where he said, go and make disciples. Preaching the gospel is one thing, making disciples is another thing.

Preaching the gospel is, relatively speaking, much easier. You preach and say, okay, I've covered this area, everybody's heard the gospel. Go to another area, preach, everybody's heard the gospel.

Like that, we can say we covered different parts of the world, they've all heard the gospel. Now it's up to them. If they don't accept Christ, they go to hell.

But making disciples is a much more difficult task because you tell them that Christ died for their sins and then you have to make them followers of Jesus Christ. That's a disciple. So the Matthew 28 commission is a step higher than the Mark 16 commission.

So we realized that and we realized that most of Christendom was interested in evangelism. We are all for that. People have sometimes accused us in CFC saying, you guys are not interested in evangelism.

I say, really? How did we get 7,000, 8,000 believers in our churches if we didn't believe in evangelism? How did we get 2,000, 3,000 from non-Christian backgrounds if we didn't believe in evangelism? How did we end up planting churches in two villages where for 2,000 years there was no church? We believed in evangelism, but we didn't stop there. We believed in making those believers into disciples. So I believe we must preach the gospel.

Even today I seek to say, Lord, give me an opportunity to be a witness wherever I am. If I'm traveling somewhere or living somewhere, make me a witness. Maybe there's somebody who's needy.

I want to be a witness. Sitting in a plane sometimes, we don't want to just start preaching the gospel to somebody to see, first of all, whether he's interested or not. So one of the things you can do, which I do, open a Bible on that table in front of you in the plane, and if that guy is interested, he may start a conversation.

I want to just make it known that I'm a Christian and I'm available. So I was sitting the other day in a plane, and I had my phone in front of me and the Bible on the phone, and we sit close to each other in the plane. He can read what I'm reading on the phone.

And I was reading the Bible on that phone for quite a while, and this guy sitting next to me found himself a bit uncomfortable, and he got up and exchanged seats with his wife in front, and his wife came and sat

back there. And I was wondering what happened. He said he was probably offended that the one sitting next to me was a Christian who was reading the Bible.

Well, then I knew he was not interested. I left it, but I prayed for him. Whenever something like that happened, we pray for that person that somehow he will come to know the Lord.

He's a lost soul. He needs salvation. So we started with Luke 14, and it's very important because at the end of this passage from Luke 14, 25 to 33, the three conditions of discipleship, very rarely emphasized.

Most people don't understand. It's fundamental, foundational, and everyone here must understand the three conditions. If you don't fulfill them, you're not a disciple.

You're not a follower of Christ, and you can't be integrated into the church that Jesus is building. An intellectual faith, I believe that Christ died for my sins, and to mouth without words, Lord Jesus come into my heart. You never know whether something has happened or not, but if you're a disciple, you know for certain.

So at the end of this passage on the three conditions of discipleship, he mentions verses 25 to 33. He then compares it to salt, verse 34. Always read a verse in its context.

Where did he speak about salt? He spoke about salt after speaking about discipleship. Verse 25 to 33 is discipleship conditions, and then he said, that is how your salt will be good, and we all know that there can be salt which is tasteless, which looks like salt, but it's lost its taste, and then of course it's useless. You know how very little salt is enough to add taste to the food.

You don't need a whole spoonful. Very little salt, and you can immediately make out there's salt here, and Jesus said it must be like that with us wherever we are. I felt like that in the years when I was in the navy.

Every person who worked with me must know that I am a follower of Jesus Christ, and sometimes it would offend some of those non-Christian people or senior officers, and sometimes they would try to put me into difficult situations or give me a bad report because they hated Christianity. That's fine, but those are the instances in my life. I was only 23, 24 years old.

It made me a strong Christian, but it's very important wherever you are, my brother and sister, you must be like salt that has not lost its taste. People may not be converted, but they must know once in my life I came across a man who was a true Christian. It was not just namesake.

There was something about him which was different. They must say that about you. All the people you work with, the people who know you well, your relatives whom you know very well, they must know this man, this woman is different.

He's not the average run-of-the-mill type of Christian. He was different. We must be like salt which has got a taste about it.

When people come in touch with us, hear us, talk to us, get to know us, they say this guy is different from the average Christian I have met. I hope that will be true of every person in this church. Salt is good, but if it is tasteless, what does he say it is? Whatever Christian is that, verse 35, useless.

Imagine Jesus using a word like that. You are a good-for-nothing, useless Christian if you have lost your taste. It's a strong word Jesus used in verse 35, useless.

Useless, fit to be thrown out into the rubbish pile. Imagine Jesus saying that about a person who calls himself a Christian. You are good for nothing.

You should not call yourself a Christian because you have lost the taste. People around you don't seem to see anything different about you. You crack the same dirty jokes they crack and you laugh at the dirty jokes they talk about and maybe you are unrighteous like they are or some other way.

Your interest is in the same worldly things that they are interested in. Jesus says you're useless. Where is the salt? Jesus used two pictures, the light for example.

That's another picture. You're the light of the world. Light is something you can be immediately aware of.

When you come into a room you know whether there's light there or not. You walk into a dark room and you know there's no light here. It's like salt.

Salt, you taste food, you immediately know whether there's salt. That was the challenge that came to me and particularly when I was surrounded by a whole lot of unbelievers in the place where I work. I said people must know over a period of time.

They may not know the first day but after having lived with me for a few weeks or so they must know this guy is different. We met many Christians but this guy is different. They must say that about you my brothers and sisters because the world has met many types of Christians but they must see that you're different.

There's a taste about you. There's a light that comes when you come to the room. They stop cracking those dirty jokes when you come into that crowd.

That's how it must be. So that's what it means to be salt. So what are the conditions he said? The three things basically.

Number one, verse 25, to love father, to love Jesus more than father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters and even your own life. The number one condition of getting salt in your life is to love Jesus supremely. He's more valuable to you.

You love him more than you love your father. Love your mother. You're willing to offend your father and mother if necessary to please the Lord.

Now remember this is the same Jesus who taught us to honor our father and mother. We must honor our father and mother. Sure, always speak respectfully to them etc but when it comes to what Jesus stands for we are willing to offend our parents even and say, I'm sorry dad I can't do that.

I'm a Christian. Sorry mom I can't do that. I'm a Christian.

You know particularly when you're grown up. I'm willing. That's the meaning of hate.

Hate is a strong word and when I first read it I couldn't understand it properly. It's a word relative to love for Christ. So you know Jesus used pictures and I like to read the Bible with pictures in my mind and the picture that came to my me in verse 26 was my love for my parents and for my wife and children.

You see that's another thing including wife and children. I'm not supposed to love my wife or my children more than I love Christ and I looked at it like this. The light of the stars is very bright.

We don't see it so brightly because it's so far away but it's very very bright. Some stars are brighter than the sun and my love for my wife and children and father and mother must be like the light of those stars. It must never be dark.

No there must be no darkness in my life. My love for my parents and my children and my wife must be a light like the light of the stars. But in the daytime when the sun comes up you look in the sky and you can't even see the stars.

They haven't been eradicated. They're still in the sky but the light of the sun is so bright that it says looks as if the stars don't exist. That's the picture I get from this verse.

As I said my love for my parents, wife, father, wife and children are like the light of the stars but when compared with my love for Christ it's like the brightness of the sun that it looks as if I don't even love my relatives. In other words Christ is so important in my life that I'm willing to offend every one of my relatives in order to please the Lord. That's the only type of person who can be a disciple.

He doesn't deliberately offend but if it's a choice between Christ and one of his relatives he says no doubt in his mind what he stands for. I hope that is true in every one of your cases. The second condition of discipleship is verse 27 to carry your own cross to say no to myself.

Cross is a place of death. Inside our heart there's a throne where self sits there. Self gets hurt that's why we get angry.

Self gets offended that's we have a bitterness against somebody. Somebody offended me in some way and I keep that bitterness forever because self is on the throne. That's why we get hurt, that's why we get angry, that's why we keep an offense.

Jesus says you got to kill that self and get it off the throne and let Christ rule there. That in simple words is the meaning of taking up the cross every day because you can put Christ on your throne one day and tomorrow you may put yourself again. You can be so challenged in a Sunday meeting.

Yes I want to put Christ on my throne but it may last only for one day and the next day you find self is back on the throne again. So Jesus said you got to take up your cross every day and I found that in the years since I understood what it means to take up the cross that I have to make that choice every day in different situations. In this situation am I going to get offended? No.

Self is going to die. I will not get offended. Am I going to hate this man who hates me? No.

I'm going to love him. Am I going to wish evil for this man who did evil to me? No. I'm going to wish good for him.

Am I going to fight with this man who's come for a quarrel with me? No. I shall pursue peace with him because self is not on the throne. I refuse to get offended.

I refuse to feel hurt. I refuse to have a bitterness against anyone. I refuse to keep an offense against somebody.

I refuse to have an unforgiving spirit against someone because self has been put to death. I make that choice every day and you can make that choice for many days and then one day you forget about it and back comes all that old bitterness against somebody. This is what brings dishonor to the name of Christ.

This is what makes the devil. We read in Revelation 12 that the devil accuses God's people to God. I'm very aware of that.

I've said, Lord, my father in heaven, I don't want the devil ever to accuse me to you saying I have violated your law. If the devil turns around and tells God, see Zach over there, he's got a bitterness against somebody. Can't you see it, God, in his heart? See how he's offended with that person? See how he wishes evil for that person who did evil to him? I don't want such an accusation.

I say, Father, let that never happen a single day in my life that the devil can accuse me to you saying I don't love somebody, saying I've got a bitterness against someone or I wish evil for someone just because he did evil to me. Let that never, never happen. We can live that life if we decide every day self is not going to be on my throne right from the morning.

Self will not be on my throne. Christ will be there. That's the meaning of taking up the cross.

And the third condition is verse 33. You can't be my disciple unless you give up all your possessions and this is something which I've explained like this. Possessions are some things we hold on to tight.

Does that mean I have to be like these hermits and monks who give up everything in the world and go and live in a monastery? No. No, true Christians don't have to live in a monastery. I've never lived in a monastery.

So I've tried to understand this verse and I've discovered that possession is what I hold on to. This is my possession. I possess it.

Maybe a house or a car or something valuable. Maybe money or bank account or shares that you hold in a company. It's all possessions.

And the Lord says you must not possess it. You can have it which means you open your palm. It's there.

The house is in your name. The car is in your name. That money is in your name at the bank account.

You haven't taken it all out and given it to the poor. It's there. But you don't possess it.

You don't say it's mine. Lord, I have it. It's in my name and I say I acknowledge that it all belongs to the Lord.

I remember the first time in my life when I owned a house. I never expected I would but my dad bought one for me way back more than 50 years ago. And I say okay.

And I was so scared. 1972. I honestly say I was so scared that this would become an idol in my life.

I said, Lord, I don't want this house to be an idol in my life. And if you ever see this is going to be idol in my life, burn it up. Burn it up.

I'm willing to see it burnt into flames if it has become an idol. No. I want Christ to be Lord in my life.

And I sought to keep that attitude towards my bank account, towards any possession I had. I used to ride a scooter and I said, Lord, I don't want the scooter to be an idol. Dear brothers and sisters, make sure that even if you have 101 things you don't possess tightly even one of them.

Say, Lord, they're all yours. If you have that attitude, you will not grieve if you lose something. I've lost money.

I've lost different things in my life. I've had things that I own which are spoiled and wrecked. But I don't lose sleep over that.

I said, it's okay. I had them. The Lord gave and the Lord taken away.

That's fine. So that's the meaning of not possessing things. It's not becoming a monk or emptying your bank account.

I must not hold on to it. Now if I keep these three conditions, I'm a disciple. And this is what we taught right from day one.

And we took many, many weeks to emphasize this because it was all new to people. Some of you, if you're honest, you will admit that in all the Christianity that you have been around so far, you never had it explained so clearly to you. And yet it's in your Bible.

And some of you have been reading the Bible for years. Have you seen it so clearly as you see it today? Never forget it. We emphasized it because I saw through many years.

God allowed me, before we started CFC, to be in many, many Christian groups for 16 years. And I saw what was missing. And what the Lord told me was, you've seen what is being taught in many, many Christian churches.

You read the Bible now and find out what they don't teach and teach those things. So I said, okay, the things which others are teaching, I don't have to emphasize that, but I want to teach the things they are not teaching. And this is one of those things.

The other thing we emphasized when CFC started was from Matthew 5. There we saw in Luke 14, we saw about salt. In Matthew 5, 6, and 7 is the other passage of scripture we emphasized in the early days. And this is the Sermon on the Mount, the most important message that Jesus preached to his disciples.

Again, very little preached, very little emphasized in much of Christendom. But why is this important? Because at the end of the Sermon on the Mount, I want you to see this very, very, very important parable that Jesus spoke at the end of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 7. Please turn to Matthew 7 in verse 24, where Jesus said, he's particularly referring to these three chapters. The three chapters, Matthew 5, 6, and 7, he's saying, whoever hears these words of mine, which are these words, chapter 5, 6, and 7, and then he talks about two types of people, both hear.

Listen, this is not somebody who doesn't go to church, who doesn't read the Bible, who has no interest in the things of God. No! These are two people, both of them go to church, both of them will read the Bible, both of them have an interest in the things of God, but the big difference between the two is this, one hears and obeys, but he goes out and does not obey it. The other hears and obeys.

One person goes to church every Sunday, reads the Bible every day, doesn't obey. The other person, even if he doesn't read the Bible every day, he obeys what he does read. What is more important? Reading the Bible every day? Very good habit.

I've sought to have that habit for more than 60 years, but more important than that is obeying what the Bible says. That's what Jesus said at the end of the Sermon on the Mount. He said, you've heard all these things.

Now, don't think just because you have heard it and understood it, or today we can say somebody explained it, that you got it. You haven't got it. And is the difference between the man who hears and the man who obeys a very slight difference, sort of a one degree off? No! It's a tremendous difference.

Okay, the man who hears, verse 24 to 25, but does not obey, is like a man... I'm sorry, the man who hears but does not obey, verse 26 and 27, is like a man who built his house on sand. He said, it's too much of a headache to lay a foundation. Here, what a lot of money, what a lot of effort.

Let me make a good superstructure. Nice big building that everybody will appreciate. He was not worried about what was underground.

You know, every building has got two parts. This building has got two parts. The house in which you live has got two parts.

One is hidden, invisible. One is visible. And your Christian life is like that.

There's an invisible part which nobody can see. Even your husband or wife cannot see it. And there's a visible part which everybody can see.

The visible part is important. We must have a good testimony before men. You're the light of the world, but you know that every building, the invisible part, the foundation, is what determines whether this building will stand or not.

And the more important the building, like a skyscraper, the deeper the foundation must be. And that's what Jesus was saying here. The important thing is not the impression you make with your outward Christian life on people.

Is there a hidden foundation in the hidden area of your life? But the foundation, remember, is hidden. Is there a strong foundation? How do we know that? Here's the difference. If you're listening to the truths in the church, like today or any other day, and you don't take it seriously in your daily life, discipleship or anything else, you're like a person who just wants to create a good impression before people.

Your private life before God, your secret thoughts, you're not bothered about. Let me tell you this in plain words. If you're more concerned about your external testimony, what other people think of your Christianity, more than what Almighty God thinks about your thought life, what Almighty God thinks about your attitudes towards people, I'll tell you what Jesus calls you.

A hypocrite. One who's trying to give a good impression before people, but is not pure inwardly. More interested in the opinion of men than the opinion of God.

That is the foolish man who builds on sand. He's not worried about the foundation. He says, nobody sees the foundation.

Why should I be bothered about it? That's the Christian who says, nobody sees my thought life. Why should I be pure there? Nobody sees my attitude to people. Why should I be careful about that? I must be concerned that I give make a good impression, that I love people, that I talk in a nice way, and everybody has a good opinion about me because they say I'm a very kind person, I'm a very gentle person, I'm a very generous person.

It's easy to build up a reputation. The building. But Jesus said, if it doesn't have a foundation of obedience in the secret place where nobody sees you.

Obedience when you're all by yourself. In other words, how you talk to your wife at home, or your husband. Not how you talk to your friends.

Not as important. Everybody sees that. How do you talk to your wife at home? How do you talk to your children at home? Not how well you control your temper when you're in church.

Everybody says about you, oh there's a brother or sister. I never see them losing their temper. I like to see how they are at home.

That's the underground part, the foundation part. Jesus said that is more important than this outward building which everybody sees. That's the point of this parable.

The hidden part. You know the Bible speaks, you know that in a tree the most important part is the roots. Why do you find in a storm some trees get uprooted and some trees don't get uprooted? Why is that? Has it got to do with the number of branches or leaves or fruit? No.

It's got nothing to do with all that. The strength of a tree is in that which is hidden underground. The strength of a building is in that which is hidden underground.

The roots. That tree did not get uprooted in the storm because it had strong roots. All these things are clear and the Bible, Jesus also spoke about trees and having roots and all that.

In all these things the important thing that comes through is your hidden life is much more important than your visible life. What God thinks of your thoughts, your attitudes and your motives. Think of three areas.

Your thoughts, nobody can see them. Your attitudes to people, nobody can see that. And the motive with which you do things.

There are people who preach God's word. Their motive is to make money. Their motive is to get honor.

We don't know that. We may think they're wonderful people, wonderful preachers, but God sees the motive. So those three things, thoughts, attitudes, motives, are more important than the two visible things.

The visible things are our words and our actions. We are very careful with our words and our actions, particularly in the midst of people whose opinion we value. Let me tell you my brother sister, if you fear God, you will be more interested in your thoughts which go through your mind throughout the day, which nobody can see.

Your attitudes towards people, particularly your attitude towards somebody who detests you or hates you or speaks evil about you. Do you have an attitude of love and compassion, forgiveness, and your motive with which you do good things? That is the mark of a person who's got a good foundation. When the storm

comes, that tree will not be uprooted.

Why is it when some storm comes in your life, you suddenly you behave in a peculiar way, in an unchristian way? I'll tell you why. A storm, where there was no storm, your tree stood wonderfully. But a storm came into your home and suddenly a storm came into your finances and suddenly the tree is uprooted.

Why? It's got nothing to do with your Bible knowledge. Everything was so beautiful on the outside. Your foundation was not strong.

The roots were not strong. And Jesus said, this one man's house was blown up, completely destroyed because it had no foundation. He heard but he did not obey.

The other person, he took time to build a foundation. He took long, many months to lay a good foundation. By the time he was laying the foundation, the other guys, the foolish man's house was complete.

And in the eyes of the world, that man looked wise because with very little money he built a house. Well, this man is still struggling with the foundation. Everybody thought he was foolish.

But wait till the storm comes. Wait till the flood comes. Then you discover who is wise or foolish.

Wait till the time comes, some storm comes into your life. Some calamity. That is the day you will know how deep your foundation is.

Not when everything is going smoothly and everybody's saying nice things about you. No. And in future storms that come in the future, for example, even in your place of work.

Some difficult situation comes where you are tempted to compromise and give up your Christian convictions because you want to preserve your job. Your boss tells you to tell a lie. You know you can make a little more lie.

You can make a little more money by cheating on your taxes, by not revealing all your income. These are little, little things. Who will discover it? Even the IRS will not discover it, if you are clever.

But God sees those things. Those are the things that make a difference between a true man of God and the woman of God and someone who's just an outward Christian. And we want in our churches people who are wholehearted, whose Christianity is seen in the foundation, in the roots, and in the places where nobody sees them, in their home.

So what are these things that Jesus spoke about which he said you have to obey? I'm not going to go through the whole of them. But I just wanted to say one or two things. The Sermon on the Mount begins with one sentence.

Very, very important sentence. Matthew 5.3. Blessed are the poor in spirit. That refers to humility.

The most important thing is humility. Earlier on Jesus said he has revealed his truth to babies. What do babies have that you and I don't have? One quality babies have which you and I don't have.

We've got more knowledge than them. We've got more experience than them. But babies have got more humility than us.

None of us can equal a baby in humility. That baby, that one month old baby lying in the cradle has got zero pride. If you could look into its thoughts, it's not thinking, oh how smart I am, how good looking I am.

Nothing. It may be very good looking and all that, but it doesn't think so. Humility.

Jesus said God reveals his truth to babes. So I remember when I read that verse in Matthew 11 which we started with, I said Lord what to do? I'm not I'm not dumb. I am intelligent.

I've got a good mind and a good brain. But it's not my accomplishment. What to do? I was born with it.

If you're intelligent, remember it's not an accomplishment. You were born with it. Don't think that that makes you superior to anybody.

Your genes gave you a certain intelligence and you're not responsible for it. You got it. And somebody who's born dumb, okay they were born that way.

Don't despise them. So I said Lord, if you have hidden the truth from the wise and the intelligent, what to do? What should I do? I'm a clever intelligent person. Not because I worked to get it.

I was just born with it. I was born with a good brain. Does that mean you'll hide things from me? And the Lord said, well you can be like a child if you want to.

Even if you're clever or intelligent, you can humble yourself and acknowledge that even that in the things of the world and all your worldly work and all that you may be intelligent. But when it comes to the Bible, come to it like a baby. Then I understood the secret.

I must not come to the Bible with all my brains and my cleverness. I'll get nothing out of it. I'll get knowledge.

I'll get information that I can impress people with. But I will not get revelation that changes my life. I will not get revelation that changes that helps me to overcome anger.

That helps me to overcome dirty thoughts. No. I will just have knowledge that I can preach to others.

So I said, Lord help me. I want to come to the Bible like a little child, not knowing. I don't know.

I don't understand. Give me something in the world I can quickly grasp it. But in the Bible, Lord, unless you reveal to me, I won't be.

What Peter got by revelation, he said on that revelation, on that rock of revelation, you said you will build your church. Not Peter. Church is not built on Peter.

Blessed are you, Peter, because my Father has revealed, has given you revelation. And Jesus said on this rock of revelation, I will build my church. So I understood that if I want to build a church that pleases God, I need revelation.

And I need to encourage people to get revelation from God through the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is called the Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation. Dear brothers and sisters, when you read the Bible, seek for revelation more than information.

So for that, you have to be number one, poor in spirit. Lord, I don't understand. I compare it with the man who's poor in money.

He's got nothing. When he, why does he go begging? In India, poor people go to house to house begging. Can you give me something? Every day.

If you tell them, well, I gave you 10 rupees yesterday. Well, sir, that's finished. Give me some more.

Every day he is poor. I've seen people like that, the beggars in India. And the Lord told me that's how I got to be when I come to God.

Lord, there are many things I know in the world, the things I know in the Bible in my head, but revelation, unless you give it to me, I'll be empty. Give me revelation that changes my life. How do I know the difference between revelation and knowledge? Knowledge does not change my life.

Knowledge makes me proud. Revelation makes me humble. Revelation changes my life.

It makes me love my wife. Revelation makes me careful about my thoughts. Revelation makes me careful about my attitudes, motives.

Revelation is given to the humble. Then one more verse I want to show you is Matthew 5 20. Unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

Many people who preach the gospel, they will never come to this verse to tell them how to enter the kingdom of heaven. They'll go to some other verse which says, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. But does that verse clash with this verse? No.

You've got to get the whole truth. You must take that verse plus this verse. Like you know when the devil said, it is written to Jesus in the temptation.

It is written his angels will protect you if you jump off the roof. And Jesus said, it is also written thou shall not tempt the Lord your God. So remember the whole truth in the Bible is not contained in it is written.

The whole truth is contained in it is written and it is also written. Like the two wings of a bird. If you have only one part of the truth, you will go round and round with one wing.

But if you have it is written and it is also written, you compare scripture with scripture, then you fly forward. Otherwise you don't make progress. You go in circles like a lot of people.

So when you tell people how to become righteous, receive Christ. Remember this verse also. You enter the kingdom of heaven by your righteousness exceeding the righteousness of the Pharisees.

And the Pharisees had a pretty high standard of righteousness. Don't forget. They were upright.

But the difference is what? Not that they give 10 percent and I give 20 percent of my income. That's not the point. The point is the righteousness of the Pharisees was external.

Mine is external plus internal. That is how my righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the Pharisees. Two examples.

I'll stop with two examples. The Pharisees, verse 21, did not commit murder. I inwardly don't get angry.

That's the difference. Another example, verse 27. The Pharisees don't commit adultery.

I don't lust in my mind. Just two examples. You go through Matthew 5, 6, and 7. You'll see many more examples.

In the rest of Matthew 5, 6, and 7, Jesus is contrasting what he said in verse 20. Here is the righteousness of the Pharisees. Here's what your righteousness must be.

They said don't murder. I say don't get angry. They said don't commit adultery.

I say don't lust after women. They say don't tell lies when you're taking a vow. I say never tell a lie.

They say pray. I say pray but don't pray to impress people. Pray in secret before God.

So everywhere there's this contrast. One is the superstructure which everybody can see. The other is the hidden part.

Anger is something. Ecclesiastes says anger dwells in the heart of a fool. You may not even express it.

You can be angry in your heart and never speak a word of anger. Ecclesiastes says you're a fool. So if we concentrate on these things, I believe our life, first story, our family life, the second story, and our church, the third story, we will be built on a good foundation and I pray that every one of us will take this seriously so that our lives and our families and our church can be on a good foundation.

And it'll be like salt that people can get the taste of it. Amen.

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