

SERMON THOUGHTS ABRIDGED

**Sermon MATTHEW 7:24-25  
ON THE ROCK**

*Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.*

The text is part of the closing words of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7). Fitting words for the closing of Confirmation Class. Build on the Rock.

When driving 65 mph on winter roads, one needs to have good contact with the pavement or gravel. When putting up a 20' flagpole, one needs to anchor it well in the ground. When building a house, one needs to make a good foundation. When raising a child, one needs to ground the child in right and wrong, and why. When living in this sinful world, one needs to have strong footing, lest all the forces of evil sweep one away.

Confirmands, you are on your way. Your parents have taught and trained you. You have been instructed in the ways and will of God by the pastor. You are pleasant, polite, hardworking, faithful young people. Does the Sermon on the Mount make you feel "secure"? I've got this! "Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth. Blessed are the peacemakers for they shall be called the sons of God. Don't murder. Don't commit adultery. Do unto others, as you would have others do unto you." A lot of people like the Sermon on the Mount. They read it at face value. They conclude they are in good shape with God, because they follow His advice. They are pleased by the words of this text: *Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.*

But slow down! There's more involved than the face value of the Sermon on the Mount. It's far too easy to miss verses like 5:20. *For I say to you that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.* It's not surface obedience; it's a matter of the heart. Not just murder offends God, but also scorn, disdain, & ridicule of others. Not just the deed of adultery, but the desires of the heart. A godly right for justice is not to be confused with revenge or getting even. The wealth of this earth is not a safe place to find security. Being a good person, or saying the right words, does not open heaven for you. It's a matter of the heart, and it needs to exceed the righteousness of even the best people.

Now what? How good is your self-made foundation for building a life that will get you to heaven? Not good, is it. The solution? The rescue in Jesus! The Sermon on the Mount, even this particular text, doesn't lavish upon us the Gospel of Forgiveness in Christ, but it's there. *Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us (6:12).* Forgiveness won by the atonement (peace-making) of Jesus is proclaimed to us. Other words of Jesus and the rest of the Bible bring out the whole picture. When Jesus says in this text, *He who does the will of My Father* will enter the kingdom of heaven, we know exactly what that means. In John 6:29 we read. *This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.* That's Good News of salvation in Christ. Your attempts are a bad foundation.

Jesus is the real foundation on which you build. It's not your good and sincere life. Jesus is real wisdom. *I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through Me (John 14:6). He was wounded for our transgressions . . . by His stripes we are healed, (Isaiah 53:5). God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them (II Corinthians 5:19) Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12).* In Jesus, who has reconciled the Father to you, who has settled for you God's dissatisfaction with you, you have a rock foundation that will stand. In Christ the Father receives you as his dear child. The dirt of your sin is washed away. You are forgiven. The doors of resurrection from the grave to eternal life in heaven are open. In Jesus, you are safe. Trust His open arms.

The devil with his evil forces is going to fall upon you in life to try to knock you down. *The rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house,* the text says. With brute force, with quiet trickery, with ungodly longings and desires, he will try to undermine you. In fact, he's been at it all along. How great does your

life seem right now? Is the devil trying to sour it? How happy are you with yourself? Without Jesus you may as well give up. But with Jesus you stand solid against sin and death and Satan. God holds you safe in His arms. Our text says, *That house did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.* Forgiveness and heaven are certain in Jesus. Even if your earthly house gets washed away, even if you die at a young age, in Jesus the crucified and risen Savior you are secure. Think of Noah. Everything secure for him on earth was violently swept away, but the Lord kept him safe in the ark. Noah built on God's promise of the Savior and escaped death in a "tipsy" ark. It's the same for you. Build on the Jesus, your Savior, your Rock, and you are secure, loved, and safe—no matter what the world says. No matter what!

So be it! Amen!

Pastor Kanzenbach---