

Over the last year and a half the Devon tower has risen in downtown Oklahoma City to nearly fifty stories. This building is an impressive feat of engineering, design, and construction. It's an amazing process whether you like architecture or not. But that process would go nowhere if not for the set of plans put together by the architect. Without those no building of that magnitude gets off the ground. The engineers wouldn't know what to engineer and the contractors wouldn't know what to construct.

A smart architect, actually any architect wanting success will design high quality buildings that please the client and aesthetically look pleasing. Every architect knows that starts with a proper foundation. It's certainly not the glamorous part. It's not the part of the building you get awards for. But it's the essential part and without it the building would fall. Your life has the parts that people see, comment on, and the parts that we take pride in. But life also needs a steady foundation. Without it the pretty stuff doesn't matter.

Jesus was speaking about the foundation as he finishes up the Sermon on the Mount in the gospel. He makes the observation that if the foundation is off the rest of life is too. This includes those we listen to for direction as we build a life. It includes the things we do in our life to show what our foundation is made of. Everything in life, Jesus points out, everything depends on knowing we need to...

**Build on a firm foundation**  
**Doing the will of God**  
**Hearing the words of God**

Think of the last time you shopped for a car. Remember how the salesperson talked. Luxury interior, powerful engine, good handling, great gas mileage. They talked smooth trying to make the sale. Not once did they tell you they were just trying to sell you the car so they could get a sales commission. They never told you if you could get a better deal elsewhere. Salespeople don't do that. Jesus says that false teachers don't come right out and tell you they're a false teacher either. **"They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves."** The false teachers get you thinking everything is okay, that they really are here to show you God's will. But they're hiding.

Because false teachers hide we might be fooled into listening. Their books and videos all sound good. They mention the buzzwords we're listening for like love, Jesus, and God. We relax thinking we're safe, those are Bible words. Then without an announcement things change. Suddenly the focus is on stopping victimization in other countries. Your own prosperity and how that's what God wants for you can take priority. Or when you're in a discussion with friends, discussions meant to express and share ideas, the question is raised what's so bad about homosexuality or abortion. Or someone says convincingly that the creation account in Genesis is wrong. Their arguments sound good; right to choose, be who you are, seriously what about rock formations. Maybe their arguments start to convince us and we start believing them.

Jesus warns us that not everyone who sounds like a genuine teacher of God's Word and his will is genuine. They might run around using the name of Jesus. They do great things in society. They sound sincere. Take a look at what they've built their foundation on. What's their teaching? Does it match the Bible? Does their content build up or harm? Does it strengthen faith or destroy it? Jesus is clear, the only teacher worth anything is the one leading others to see that the only one getting to heaven is **"he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven."** What's that will of God? Jesus explains it in John's gospel, **"For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day."** Doing God's will is believing in Jesus. Whatever teacher not matching that message is false. We only follow teachers and pastors who teach people to do God's true will, that is hear and believe what the Bible says about Jesus the Savior.

But so many claim to be from God, seem to heal people, speak with passion. What about them? **"Many will say to me on that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles? Then I will tell them plainly I never knew you. Away from me you evildoers."** The world is shocked by this. Jesus calls people doing things in his name evildoers. Really he is saying they themselves are working against him rather than for him. The greatest evil anyone can do is speak and work against Christ and the gospel. These people we must avoid. Surround yourself with teachers who will teach Christ truthfully and the gospel plainly so you are not in any danger.

The contractor is building Devon tower exactly as the architect designed. They're doing the will of the architect. But as days go they may forget. That's why they have building plans on site. With the documented plans they can never forget. God's people don't have a set of plans and drawings, but rather a set of pages. God's people who want to build on a firm foundation need to hear the words of God to continue to know the direction for their lives. Then at the end they will be able to survive to eternal life.

Life has basically two kinds of people, wise and foolish. Jesus pictures them as builders. **"Everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on the sand."** The wise man chose rock, something sturdy that seemed unshakeable. The fool chose sand, something shifty and not always stable. Imagine their houses looked similar. Both stood, neither moved, both looked okay. All looked okay till the cataclysmic event came.

In life unbelievers exist right next to believers. Their lives look very much alike. You look very similar to any unbelieving neighbors you have. You have jobs, drive cars, have gym memberships, and daycares. It almost makes us forget the foundation. The unbeliever builds and counts on friends, cars, and the job. Everything is resting on a very fine tuned well placed sand pile. You and other believers have those things too. But the Bible has convinced you that they aren't sturdy enough to support you. You need something more, a life built on the Word of God. Then the cataclysm comes. Not just suffering or disaster. Jesus pushes us to see the end. The cataclysm is your death. What's going to hold you up? What's going to hold your unbelieving neighbor up?

The only firm foundation is the rock **"The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fail, because it had its foundation on the rock."** Jesus pictures strength and firmness with the rock. Something sturdy and unmovable is the Word of God. The Word proclaims faith alone in Christ alone. The Word never changes. We're saved and the Word gets all the credit, we get none. We look wise, but only because we built on the rock of God's Word. That's wisdom seen only after we die. Then we'll look really smart and sensible for having built our foundation for life on the rock of God's Word. We'll be enjoying heaven. While we wait we say thanks to the Rock of our Salvation. Now we say thanks to Jesus.

Construction sites are not as chaotic as they might seem to the casual observer. Everyone's movement is carefully orchestrated to achieve the desired outcome of the quality building the architect designed. The drawing plans provide direction while the foundation provides the essential start. Today spiritually we're looking for our foundation and start. Jesus directs us to faith so our will is in line with his will and the Father's. Our foundation is God's Word. There we continue to read the plans so we stay focused. With our building on a firm foundation of the law and gospel of God's Word we are heading on the only track that leads to heaven.