

Foundational Principles

Matthew 5, 6, 7

In looking at Matthew 5, 6, 7, I want to illustrate this idea with a story about a guy named Jake and a guy named John. Both of these guys wanted to build a house. First Jake was a cheapo builder. As one might express it, he was tight! Jake wanting to save money, he thought he'd build his house on the sand and gravel. He took used lumber, old tin for the roof and attached it all with old used nails. Jake was so cheap "O" that he used a kerosene lamp for light and totted water in from the creek- no plumbing-! When Jake had finished his house he kicked back and rested. Next day a storm came blowing in and knock the cheap 'O' house down, all Jake could do is holler HELP!!!

John on the other hand was a quality builder and architect. He built his house on a solid rock foundation, using quality material and quality doors and windows. Even had flowers outside. The same next day that same storm came to John's house and blew and blew, but the house stood firm and John is sitting out on the porch watching the rain. Sit-in Pretty!
Now let's come back to reality.

When a person builds their life on dysfunctional families, rebellion, drugs and crime, hate and bitterness, that house like Jakes is going to be built on sand and gravel with no real foundation. And that foundation is going to produce insecurity, instability, strife and discord with on going dysfunction.

But when a person builds their life on a right foundation with right structure that house will stand. Matthew 7:24-28 the instruction that Jesus gave regarding His teaching. He presents the Wise and Foolish Builders. One built on the rock another built on the sand. If a person builds on the rock of the teachings of Jesus or what we're calling the Foundational principles we are building a house that is going to have stability, and structure that endures those storms of life. We can deal with the family problems, education problems, health problems and social problems that attack us. We have a rock to hold on to and something to always come back to when we fall.

To build that foundation there are four Key principles to help build that foundation. These keys help to understand the teaching.

First key is the authority of Christ. In verse 5:1 Matthew writes that when Jesus came up onto the mount he sat down to teach. Now this would sound rather simplistic to our ears, of course your going to sit down, what would a person do other than sit down. At that time in the Jewish religious system the rabbi would always sit to teach and stand to pray. So Jesus is taking a position or authority as a Jewish teacher. Also the words he spoke were also a term for authority. The term is from the Hebrew that was an oracle that the hearer would neglect to his own peril. The speaker spoke from the deeper things of his soul. His mind and heart began to communicate. So Jesus is speaking from his mind and heart or from the deeper things of his soul.

Too, when Jesus had finished these sayings the crowds were amazed at his teachings because he taught as one who had authority and not as their teachers of the law. The teachers of the law taught in such away that never addressed their deeper needs, a focus on the externals or what some rabbi said. Jesus spoke in such a way that he meets their deeper needs and as one who didn't need anyone's authority, he spoke of his own. This authority is too what we have to accept in order to accept all what he says. Thus when we come to him with our issues we have to come accepting his authority.

Second key is Mt. 6:10 Kingdom Rule. The word kingdom is used, "your kingdom come your will be done". This word kingdom refers to Gods full reign. When God has full reign in our lives these principles begin to happen. Mt. 6:33 "But seek his kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be given". Materially when God has full reign our material necessities will be provided. In principle this can be applied to all areas of life: dysfunctional families, drugs, crime, relationships, morals, work, education, money and religion. For life to function properly God's Rule must take place.

Third key is the externals of the Pharisees and teachers of the Law. These were the Jewish leaders of that day – "The Religious Folks" They practiced everything externally- going through the motions. Their religion was wrapped up in externals of rituals and ceremony. Mt 5:20 Jesus says; unless your righteousness surpasses the (external) righteousness of the Pharisees and teachers of the Law they will in no way enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus is saying that His followers were to get past the righteousness of the externals. These leaders practiced what was called the traditions of the fathers. These traditions began hundreds of years before this time. They were rules that were built as a hedge around the Law of Moses which the Jews were to follow. If they obeyed these rules they wouldn't disobey the Law, but after a few hundred years these rules became traditions that replaced the original Law. They had become traditions that were handed down—"Generational or Religious Lies" that is. They were as with any tradition external performance with no internal effect or value. Such things were the Sabbath Mt.12:1-14, fasting 6:16-18, prayer 6:5-14, giving 6:1-4, washing of hands or ceremonial washing of the hands and even the washing of cups, pictures and kettles Mk.7: 1-4. More references to this practice; Mk 7:1-22, Mt 15:1-20, Mt.23. These practices were based in external performance that never addressed the true spiritual needs of the people. Much of the teachings of Jesus were confronting these practices, his teaching addressed the deeper needs of the people then as well as for us. We would be looking at the externals of our day as being, church attendance, communion, giving, feasting, fasting, routine prayers. In some denominations of churches; ceremonial rituals, special days, were honoring men with pious titles, types of baptism, confessionals and ritualistic prayers. Last Key. Jesus taught a higher ethic or higher standard than the norm of the world and external religion. Mt 5:48 " Be perfect therefore as your heavenly Father is perfect. The word perfect is the idea of complete. Col. 2:10 uses the idea of completeness. This is the completeness we find in Christ. So Jesus isn't presenting anything too far out of reach, but a position that God gives us in his Son. So He is presenting a higher ethic or standard to live by in this passage. In Christ we are everything God wants us to be by His power not ours.

Part of the higher ethic is the view of the material. Mt 6:19-33 Jesus speaks of where your treasure is there your heart will be also. So store up for yourselves treasures in heaven. The Jews and Gentiles of Jesus day as well as our day had the problem of wanting material wealth. Their perspective was off. Jesus wasn't condemning having things it was when things had them. Which is the same with us today. Vs. 25-33 He speaks of worry about daily needs. In verse 33 He gives the answer to both these situations, Seek first his kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be added as well. It all adds up to perspective- whos first? Too, the word kingdom again refers to Gods reign in life and righteousness refers to the externals of the Jewish leaders. He is calling for true righteousness not the externals.

