

What Are You Building?
Luke 6:46-49
January 2, 2010

The passages that come before – both in Luke and in Matthew – speak of two ways of living.

The ways are distinctly different and obviously lead toward different ends.

One set is portrayed as honest and within God's will, and the other is portrayed as false.

However, one's attitudes and actions as found in the preceding comparisons can be fleeting, hard to pin down, difficult to discern between.

Eventually, though, Jesus comes to the stories of building a house.

A house is something everyone can see. It is something that takes time to build. And there is no mistaking one's intentions in building it. The house is where theory becomes reality.

As we enter into this new year of 2010, I think about all of you, and about my family and me. I have no idea what this year ahead holds for any of us.

For some of you, last year was a wonderful year. It may have been the best year of your life.

Or maybe last year was the worst year of your life.

But, whatever last year held, it is now gone and we have a brand new 365 days in front of us.

This New Year is a time for new beginnings.

Some of you will quit doing something – other will start something new.

Whatever you may be involved in during 2009, you have a question to answer for yourself:

What am I building?

As you look at how you will invest your time, energy, intelligence, monetary resources, etc – what are you building?

We are all building something. Also, as you think about what you are trying to accomplish – or what you are trying to build in your life, there is another question that goes hand-in-hand with the first:

What am I building on?

In the stories found in Luke and Matthew, Jesus presents two options – building on sand and on rock. But what do those translate into for us today?

Jesus talks first about those who build on rock, so I will, too.

The rock is the first option given upon which we can build.

I want to suggest to you that the rock represents the Principles of God that are unchangeable.

If you choose to live your life on God's Principles, then you have chosen to recognize that there are certain ideas that are always right/wrong...helpful/hurtful...God-honoring/God-disgracing.

The Bible is full of Principles by which you can live, and against which you can weigh your own actions even before you do them.

Jesus reminded us of the two greatest commandments: Love the Lord your God, and love your neighbor as yourself.

There are also the 10 Commandments.

There is the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them to do unto you.

There is the word from James that teaches us to be doers of the Word and not hearers only.

We should live with the fruits of the Spirit as our measuring stick – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

We should embrace the truth that Jesus is the Son of God who came as the Savior of the world.

These are things that you can go to on a day-to-day basis. They are tools to help you make good decisions.

These things don't change. They are God's Principles. They are a great deep strong rock upon which you can feel safe building upon.

The sand represents Preferences.

What are preferences and why are they not good to build upon?

Well, preferences are those likes and dislikes that each of us has about various things.

You may have preferences in your diet. Some of you may prefer chicken, some beef, some may prefer not to have meat at all.

Some of you may prefer one-story homes while others prefer two-stories.

Some like dogs, others like cats.

You get the idea.

There are two main problems with building you life on Preferences.

1. Each of us has our own set of Preferences. As we try to live in society with one another, we will find it difficult – if not impossible – to arrive at consensus on anything.

Also, everything is relative with respect to right and wrong. Since there is no one unchangeable standard against which we can measure all behavior and choices, we are left with a large mixed pot of ideas that may or may not complement each other.

2. Our Preferences tend to change over time. I don't like the same things to eat now as compared to when I was a kid. I don't dress the same. My taste in cars has changed. When I was a kid I wanted a 1965 Ford Mustang convertible...now I drive a sensible safe Saturn. Okay...I secretly still want the convertible.

Even my preference in college teams has changed from NC State to Duke.

My point is this...how can you build anything stable on a moving target?

The truth is this. Our *temptation* is to build our lives on our preferences rather than on God's principles. And for a while that may work – as long as the weather is good. But, as the Palestine of Jesus' day was known for its sudden torrential rains that could create instant floods that

destroyed everything in their path...so also is this world known to deal pain and destruction in our lives when we least expect it.

So, what are you trying to build this year, and what are you trying to build it on?

The goals that you have for the coming year may seem good to you right now, but have you measured them against God's Principles. Have you listened to what Jesus is calling you to do in His Kingdom?

If your daily activities and goals aren't grounded in Him, they will be short-lived and useless. Sure, you will be tired at the end of the day doing things your own way, but you will also be stressed, unfulfilled, and without true vision and direction.

So, during this year that is 2010, why not let Jesus be the architect for what you want to build in your life. Ask His advice on where to build it, and then with Him at your side, get busy building a life that will stand the test of time...a test that has eternal consequences.