

Sunday 9th May – Miriam West



Decisions Decisions!

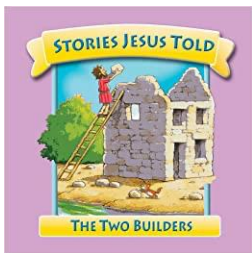
Life is all about making decisions!

What to wear, what to eat, where to go! Some are trivial and some very important.

We have to make decisions all the time- personally, as a couple, as families, at home, at work, in business and as a church.

Today's reading is a parable! **(Matthew 7 v 24-27)**

Years ago, I asked my Sunday School Children what a parable was. One lad replied 'a story Jesus told, with a meaning' (I couldn't have put it better myself).



Today's story is about two builders, many of us will remember the old Sunday School song 'The wise man built his house upon a rock.....' with arms flapping up and down doing the actions.

Let's have a look at this well known and well loved story again and see what the meaning is for us today.

We are told that both the builders heard the words of Jesus.

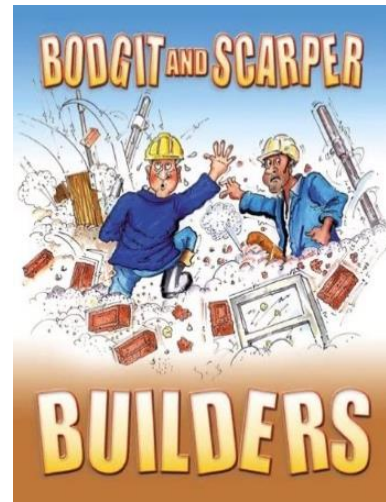
v24 &v26 'Everyone who hears these words of mine...'

These builders knew the words of Jesus. They were very much like us and knew all about Jesus' teaching! We hear these words week by week at church and in our study of the Bible.

But that's not the critical thing, it's what we do and what decisions we take that's the crucial thing.

The wrong choice

The Foolish Man



A Sandy beach,but it has a very nice view.
Some dodgy builders,but could build it quickly!
Not following rules and regulations, I can get away with it!
Finding the cheapest materials,maybe off the back of a lorry?
Cash in hand,no questions asked.
Doing it my way! I'll be ok.

It's quick, it's easy, may look very nice with a very nice view! It's ok I've built my house, maybe haven't done everything by the book – but I'll be ok!

The right choice! The Wise Man



Finding the right place to build,not always easy to find building plots.

Finding the right builders,someone you can trust, who will guide you with good advice.

Following the rules,drawing up plans, planning permission and building regulations.

Using good materials from a trusted supplierand they have a guarantee.

Take your time, work hard but it's worth it in the end. A beautiful property that will last for years. A good investment.

But the story doesn't end there!





The storms came! v25 & v27

'The rain came down, the streams rose and the wind blew and beat against the house'

As with life, various storms come to batter us, often when we least expect it.

The storm hit both the buildings in the same way. Life's storms hit both believers and non believers in the same way, it's where you've built your life that matters !

We know the outcome- To quote the old song

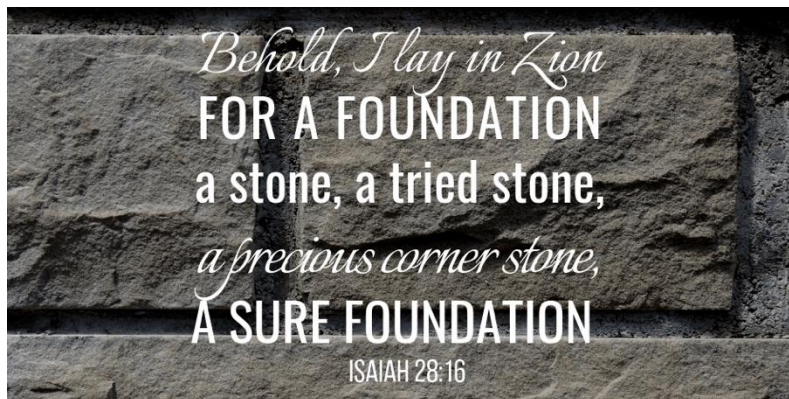


'The house on the rock stood firm' & 'The house on the sand fell flat'

So what is the meaning of this parable? So far it just sounds like an edition of 'Homes under the hammer' But as with the tv programme, there are always three properties, so let's have a look at a third property!

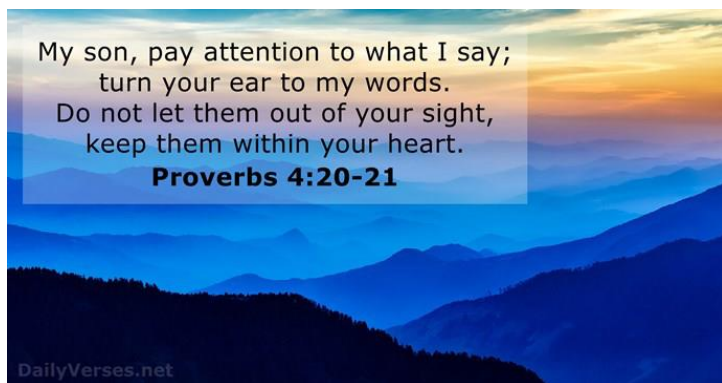
The parable talks about us as individuals and as a church, how are we going to build?

We need firm foundations.



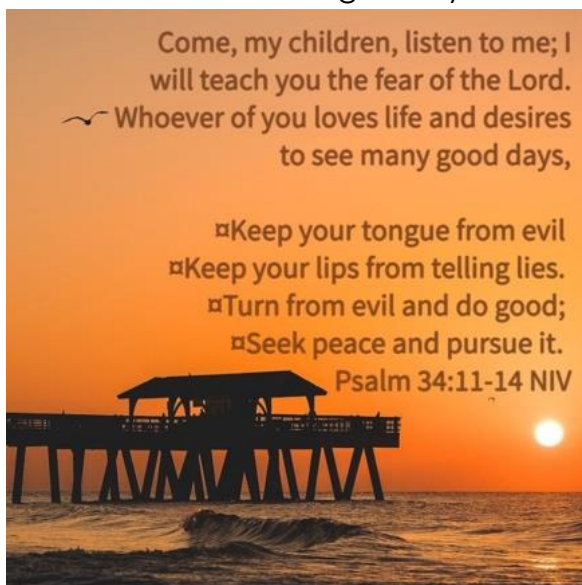
We need Jesus as our Rock to build on.

We need trusted people to lead us.



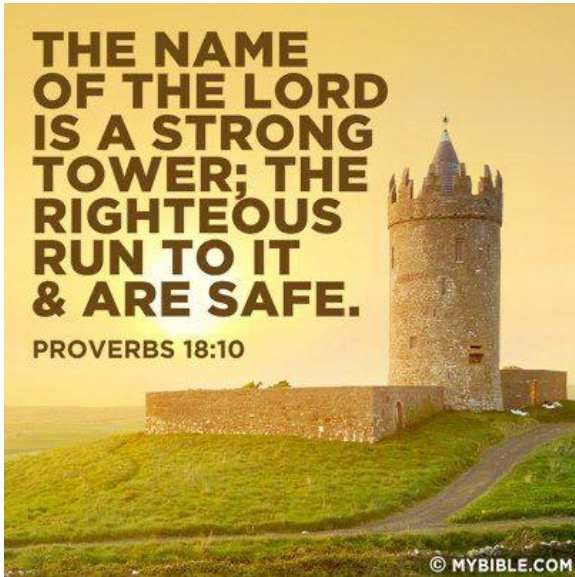
We need to listen to God's voice and follow his words.

We need to follow the right way.

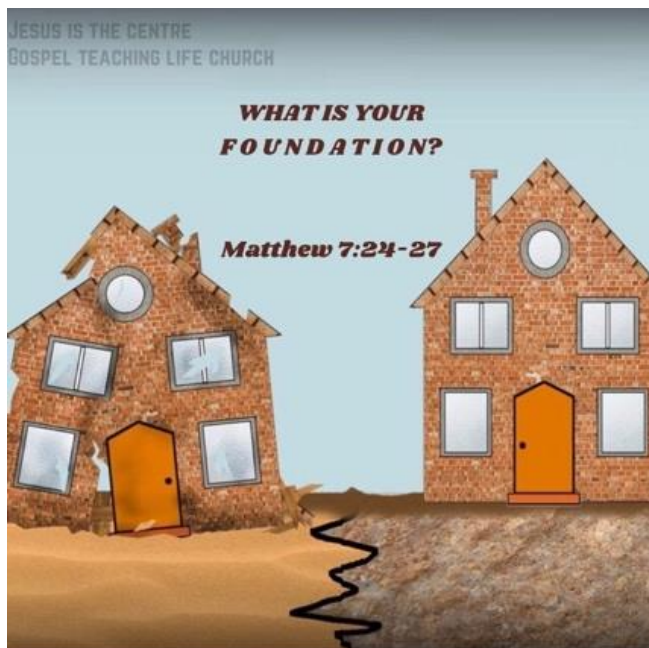


Trusting in Jesus, building our lives on him, trusting him for the future.

We have the assurance that when life's storms come (which they will) we will be safe, we have a strong tower built on Jesus the Rock.



What is your life built on? What is your foundation?



Do we want to go our own way or Jesus' way!

I pray that we will listen to these words of Jesus and build our lives, our church, on the solid firm foundation of Jesus.

'On cross the solid Rock I stand, all other ground is sinking sand'

Amen

The words in the closing song are a promise of our intentions to build on the Rock that is Jesus

'I will stand on every promise of his Word'

From the breaking of the dawn
to the setting of the sun
I will stand on every promise of your word.
Words of power strong to save
that will never pass away;
I will stand on every promise of your word.
For your covenant is sure,
and on this I am secure:
I can stand on every promise from your word.

When I stumble and I sin,
condemnation pressing in,
I will stand on every promise of your word.
You are faithful to forgive,
that in freedom I might live,
so I stand on every promise of your word.
Guilt to innocence restored;
you remember sins no more;
so I'll stand on every promise of your word.

When I'm faced with anguished choice
I will listen for your voice,
and I'll stand on every promise of your word.
Through this dark and troubled land,
you will guide me with your hand
as I stand on every promise of your word.
And you've promised to complete
every work begun in me,
so I'll stand on every promise of your word.

Hope that lifts me from despair,
love that casts out every fear
as I stand on every promise of your word.
Not forsaken, not alone,
for the Comforter has come,
and I stand on every promise of your word.
Grace sufficient, grace for me,
grace for all who will believe.
We will stand on every promise of your word.