

Series: God & Our Culture #1488

Title: Matthew 7.24-27

*Our Firm Foundation: Genesis*

Thank you for joining me today from wherever you are and by however you listen as we meet together coast-to-coast here in the United States and all the way around the world. This is our third day embarking on a journey through Genesis 1, 2, and 3, setting the foundation for the convictions Bible believing Christians have about the environment and our responsibility to it, about evolution (that men and women evolved from ape-like creatures), convictions we have about gender and sex (are there are only two genders, what about transgender), and about marriage (what is marriage, who can be married). Before we get into the environment, our first topic, I want to remind you that our convictions on all four of these matters will be based on the Bible as our foundation.

When in conversation with people who are either not Christians or with people who claim to be Christian but dismiss what the Bible plainly says, it is very important to establish where our stated opinions come from. That is, what we believe about let's say gender and sex does not come out of nowhere, or thin air, or is somehow based on our emotions and our feelings. No. What we believe is based on the firm foundation of God's Word, which is the Bible. We believe what God says is what is authoritative for us. And we want to show, we want to demonstrate from the Scripture where it says that – sticking to our example – gender is defined as follows, from the divine perspective. And therefore, we agree with what the Bible says.

It is insightful that at the end of the Sermon on the Mountain, in Matthew's Gospel chapter 7, Jesus tells the parable of the two builders. Listen as I read the words of Christ from Matthew chapter 7, verses 24-27. **“Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”**

Notice first the emphasis Jesus places on His words. “Everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them...” is used in verse 24. And “everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them” is used in verse 26. The words of Jesus are the words of God, because Jesus is God in human form. And these words are everything the Lord has said beginning back in Matthew 5, verse 1 at the start of the Sermon on the Mountain. The Word of God. The first man, who builds his house on the rock, is the man who has heard the words of Christ and has acted on them. He is the wise man. And notice that his foundation is made of *rock*. Therefore, when “the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock.”

What is the rock made of? It is made of the words of Christ. In the same way, when we build our foundation for what we believe on the Word of God, then our foundation will be made of *rock*. And when the rain of argument, when the flood of anger and hate towards Christians, when the winds blow totally contrary to our beliefs in this culture, our house, founded on the rock, will *not* fall down.

But notice the second man. The second man, who builds his house on the sand, is the man who has heard the words of Christ and has *not* acted on them. He is the foolish man. And notice that his foundation is made of *sand*. Therefore, when “the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house it fell,” for it had not been founded on the rock.

This message is so, so important: *if* our foundation for what we believe is *not* built on the Word of God, if we hear Christ's words but do not act on them, then we are fools. Our foundation is built on *sand*. And when the rain of argument, when the flood of anger and hate towards Christians, when the winds blow totally contrary to our beliefs in this culture, our house, founded on the sand *will* fall down. Notice Jesus emphasizes, at the end of verse 27, “and great was its fall.” This is an epic collapse. Friends, I ask you: the foundation for what you believe, what is it built on? Do you have a firm foundation of rock or a shaky foundation of sand?

I contend we need to build our foundation for everything we believe from the Bible, the Word of God. Then, our foundation is made of rock and will stand. It is *very* stormy weather out there. There is rain, floods, and winds banging into our house. And how will we be able to stand unless we have underpinning our convictions the truth of God's Word to us? According to Jesus, we will not stand, but being foolish, we will fall. So, taking this parable – a story meant to illustrate spiritual truth – seriously, what does the Bible say about the environment, evolution, gender/sex, and marriage and a myriad of other important topics? That is what we are coming to.

And first, we need to establish *how* we read the first Book of the Bible, Genesis, because as I have said, what we believe about these topics before us comes from this foundational Book in God's Word. I have to say what I am about to say because, sadly and tragically, there are many who say they are Christians who do not read and interpret Genesis the correct way. Some say these early chapters of Genesis are allegory. A sort of picture meant to reveal a hidden meaning, but not actually descriptive of historical people or events. Others read Genesis 1, 2, and 3 as a poem, or a myth, or a metaphor. Without taking each one of these ways of reading and understanding Genesis to task now, let me tell you that I do not believe Genesis is allegory, poetry, myth, or metaphor. I believe what I read here in Genesis is literal history.

I understand Genesis as historical narrative. The events we will read about actually happened just as the Bible says they happened. The people we will read about, like Adam and Eve, are real people who actually lived on this earth at the time and in the ways the Bible describes. Of course I take into account metaphors and figures of speech. For example, in Genesis 2.23 when Adam sings on the creation of Eve, quote, **"This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."** That is poetry, but it is a poem based in fact. Read the verses before this one that describe how God made the first woman.

There are several reasons for why I read Genesis this way. And, without spending a lot of time on this now, let me give you my best reasons for doing so. First, Jesus Christ believed Genesis was literal history. I will show you examples of this along the way, times when (in the New Testament Gospels) Jesus quotes Genesis. He takes it literally, not as an allegory, a poem, myth, or metaphor. Second, the other biblical authors read and interpreted Genesis as literal history. This is true of both Old and New Testament authors, like the author of 1 Chronicles, the Psalmist, Isaiah, and Ezekiel. The Apostle Paul and the Apostle Peter both built their doctrine on the literal history of Genesis. We will definitely see this later on. And third, only a literal, historical understanding of Genesis will give us the right foundation for the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Genesis tells us about a real/historical man Adam, a real/historical woman Eve, and a real/historical Satan, taking the form of a serpent, and tempting Eve to sin in the real/historical Garden in Eden. The real/historical sin of Adam and Eve resulted in a real/historical curse from God, which resulted in their real and historical spiritual and physical deaths. Then, there is the real/historical promise of the gospel, and in the New Testament the real/historical Jesus who died a real/historical death and experienced a real and historical resurrection, to overcome sin and death and to save from eternal punishment all who will believe in Him by faith alone. If Adam and Eve and Satan and the Garden and temptation and sin and the curse and spiritual and physical death are not real and historical, then why are Jesus Christ and the Good News of the gospel of Jesus Christ real and historical?

These, in summary, are my reasons for reading and interpreting Genesis the way I do.

So much more can be said about this, and I may say more along the way, but I am eager to explore our foundation, built on rock, and to answer from there on what we believe about matters of great importance to our culture. We do so next time here on God Is.

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