

Stand Firmly

Matthew 7:24-29



In 1866, when Samuel Stone wrote the familiar hymn, “The Church’s One Foundation,” he was responding to a schism within the church. He wanted to emphasize that no matter how divided we may be on the details, we all share a core belief—a core foundation.

Say or sing the first verse to remind you of what that foundation is:

“The Church’s one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord.

She is the new creation by water and the word.

From heaven He came and sought her to be His holy bride.

With His own blood He bought her, and for Her life He died.”

Rock or Sand

Read Matthew 7:24-27.

The average person during Jesus’ time usually built their own house with the help of their family and the community. Wisely choosing the site on which to build was critical for the stability, strength, and survival of the building. If the ground was unstable, rocks would be brought in to build a stronger foundation before building the structure. This practice would have been familiar to the listeners. The word translated here as the English noun, “foundation,” is a Greek verb *themelioo* in the original text. *Themelioo* means to lay a basis for, to erect, to consolidate, and to lay a foundation for. It is an action not an object.

- Who has prepared your foundation? How would that foundation be described?
- What does it mean to you to have a strong foundation for your faith?

We are to take Jesus’ teachings and “put them into practice.” The Greek word used here is *poieo*. It can be translated into English as “execute your duties, exercise your freedoms, fulfill your promises, or perform your work.” We are not to just stand on the foundation. We are to take action—to build our house on the foundation He has laid for us.

- People can hear Jesus’ words, quote Jesus’ words, and preach Jesus’ words yet fail to do what Jesus says in those words. Would you describe those people as fakes, hypocrites, cowards, unbelievers, or something else?

- How might someone unconsciously slide into “do as I say, not as I do”?
- What can you do to prevent yourself from following someone like that and/or becoming that person?

Authority

Read Matthew 7:28-29.

The audience at the Sermon on the Mount were amazed at his teachings. His words were unlike the typical teachings of the scribes (teachers of the law) at that time. He taught with authority! The Greek word translated as “authority” in English is *exousia*. In addition to authority, it also can mean jurisdiction, liberty, power, right, and strength.

- Where does Jesus’ authority come from?
- What does Jesus say that is so radical (consider previous lessons) that he would need authority to be believed?

In Not Of

Jesus came into the world as a baby, was raised in the culture of His time, and was surrounded by a world filled with injustice, power struggles, prejudice, corruption, pain, and death. But because he was not “of” this world, he provided the people an alternate foundation upon which they could stand against the pressure to “become one of us,” and instead, rise above the world and become part of God’s kingdom.

Look back through the lessons of this series and circle the key words or concepts that impacted or informed you the most:

Shine Brightly—Matthew 5:13-16	salt light value purpose
Relate Deeply—Matthew 5:17-37	law motive relationships
Love Radically—Matthew 5:38-48	love justice forgiveness
Act Honestly—Matthew 6:1-18	performance reward intention
Invest Eternally—Matthew 6:19-24	treasure investment decay value
Live Fearlessly—Matthew 6:25-34	worry focus confidence fear
See Clearly—Matthew 7:1-12	judgment reflection actions
Walk Wisely—Matthew 7:13-23	choices fruit gates paths
Stand Firmly—Matthew 7:24-29	foundation action authority

Which lesson was most helpful for you in breaking the chains that tie you to the world and for reconnecting you to God?