

RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE

Easter Sunrise

Matthew 7: 24-29

²⁴ “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock. ²⁶ And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. ²⁷ And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it.”

²⁸ And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, ²⁹ for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes.

The question before the kids gathered at an Easter Sunday children’s sermon was this, “What did Jesus do on Easter?” The pastor may have been looking for a variety of answers, but five-year-old Micah cut to the chase and shouted, “Jesus riz! He said he would, and he did!” And there you have it, plain and simple.

Today we look at the resurrection of Jesus through the words of a parable he told at the end of his Sermon on the Mount. You may know the story line. Two builders each build a house, one on solid rock and the other on shifting sand. Not surprisingly, when a storm comes with its torrential rains and violent winds, the house on the rock stands sturdy while the house on the sand falls apart. Jesus says, hearing his words and doing them is like building a house on rock. Hearing his words and not doing them is like building a house on sand.

It is amazing to consider the variety of sandy soils available as we consider building a life. Especially if we spend most of our time far from the sound of the teachings of Jesus, we can entertain all kind of sandy foundations. We can make our life all about making a lot of money or collecting a lot of stuff or becoming well-known and respected, or competing and winning. We can build a life on raising good kids or just being healthy or happy or

good-looking or smart.

These fair-weather foundations all work -- until the storms come. When cancer hits or relationships fall apart, when we fail utterly or lose our job or do something really stupid and face the consequences for it, then we say, “My life is falling apart! My life is a mess!” At other times we may feel the building shake, whisper a prayer like, “Help!” and wonder if we’ll make it through this one or not. If we do come out unscathed, it’s incredible how willing we are to return to our fair-weather foundations.

Today the risen Lord Jesus Christ is asking that you make him the sure foundation of your life. He is inviting you to take his teachings to heart—all of them—and to live by them. He is asking you to be a dynamic listener to his Word who thrives on aligning your will with his, living by what he teaches.

Now why would you do that? Why is Jesus Christ worthy of being the solid rock on which you build your life? That’s where Easter comes in. We may chuckle at Micah’s shout in the children’s sermon, “Jesus riz!” but what he said next is what is worth remembering even more. He said, “Jesus riz! He said he would, and he did!”

First and foremost, the resurrection of Jesus paves the way to life beyond death for all who believe in him. My prayer is that everyone here today can say, “I believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for me and rose from the dead so that I might be forgiven and have eternal life!”

Yet underneath that great confession of faith is another truth we must believe—Jesus can be trusted. That is, Jesus’ words are true. Micah got it. Jesus said he would suffer, die, and then rise in three days (Mk 9:31), and he did! Jesus said to those who opposed him, “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up” (Jn 2:19) --- and he did! When his good friend Lazarus died, Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life” (Jn 11:25), and he is!

Because “Jesus riz” just as he said he would, we can trust him. We can trust everything he teaches us. If he had not risen, if he had lied about his rising, we’d be left with sandy soil and a shaky life of very short duration. The inspired apostle Paul put it this way, “And if Christ has not been raised,

your faith is futile and you are still in your sins” (1 Cor 15:17).

If Christ has not been raised, there is no reason to worship Him next Sunday, or any Sunday, or any other day of the week. How many Sundays are we ready to gather in the cold and the dark, just to be with fellow believers as the sun breaks the horizon, and proclaim with certainty and conviction: Christ is Risen. He is risen indeed! Allelujah!

Little Micah couldn't have said it better. Amen.

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