

Building on the Rock

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[0 : 00] Well, please do have a seat and turn to your Bibles. And we're in the book of Luke as we continue our journeying with Jesus around Galilee, looking at the first nine chapters of this great gospel.

Before we dig in, let's pray together. Father God, we pray this morning you would take what is familiar and sear its truth on our hearts.

Father, you would take what we think we know and that you would apply it to our lives. Father, be with us. Send your spirit to make this word alive.

Convict and challenge, encourage, exhort and admonish. Father, have your way in our lives in this time we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Prosopagnosia. Prosopagnosia. It is a very disturbing condition, if you have it.

[1 : 03] It renders the familiar unfamiliar. It takes things that you've known all your lives and turns them into strange and foreign experiences.

It turns relatives into strangers, friends into bystanders, and even your own face into a mystery, which for people like me would be a blessing.

Prosopagnosia is commonly called face blindness. It renders sufferers unable to recognize people by their appearance.

Even their own reflection becomes unfamiliar and unrecognizable to them. It is a very rare condition, although modern research says that it could affect about two people out of every thousand.

It is incredibly debilitating. And James, in his letter, warns about a spiritual prosopagnosia.

[2 : 08] A spiritual way that we see ourselves in God's law and don't recognize or remember what we look like. He writes this in chapter one.

Humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like someone who looks at his face in a mirror and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.

The danger of spiritual prosopagnosia, of hearing without doing, of seeing but not remembering, of learning but failing to apply.

And Jesus, as he comes into land, at the end of the sermon on the plain, is warning about exactly the same thing that James warns about.

[3 : 12] He's asking us to build our lives on him through obedience. Building our lives on Jesus through obedience.

So if you've got your Bible, turn with me to Luke chapter 6 and verse 46. He says this. Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?

As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. They are like a man building a house who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock.

When the flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it because it was well built. But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation.

The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was total. It's a very familiar story.

[4 : 29] It's a very common story. It's not understanding it that's difficult. It's about doing what it says that causes us real difficulty. Jesus is at the end of the Sermon on the Plain.

He started it in chapter 6, verse 17. We've looked at it. And it comes on the back of Jesus launching out into his ministry. And we saw at the beginning of chapter 4, when he starts public ministry, he says, my ministry is going to be one centered on preaching the good news of the kingdom. Chapter 5, that is met with objection. That Jesus' ministry, one that welcomes and forgives sinners, is unpalatable to the religious elites.

He's always being asked, why? Why do you eat with sinners and tax collectors? Why do you have time for them? Then he moves on, and there's real opposition.

As Jesus collides with what they think is what God's will is. He collides with them about fasting and healing, about the Sabbath, and all sorts of things.

[5 : 40] And Jesus says, my revolutionary message needs new wineskins receptive to this message. because the religious elites have rejected it and cast him aside.

In fact, by the end of that section, we hear that they were filled with fury and disgust, and disgust with one another what they might do to Jesus.

Early on, they're looking to silence him and kill him. And then where we've been the last four weeks is we've seen Jesus telling people how they're to live as citizens of this new kingdom.

They are to mirror what God is like, be merciful, even as your heavenly Father is merciful. His first public sermon, and he's teaching his people how to stick out like healthy thumbs in an upside down world.

And this sermon has been very well applied. In fact, there's been 18 points of application, and here they all are. Loads and loads, simple instructions that he's been giving us throughout the course of this sermon.

[6 : 53] People have hung on his every word. This is revolutionary attitude that he is telling his people. This is, again, simple to understand, but very difficult to apply.

And we have heard this over the last four weeks. 18 simple points of application that Jesus says, I want you to obey to prove your citizenship in my new kingdom.

And he's nearly come to the end, and all the people are grabbing their coats and getting ready to shake his hand warmly by the door of the plane and say, wonderful sermon, Jesus, we can't wait for next week.

Jesus, though, won't let them off the hook, because this sermon has a sting in the tail. Suddenly, Jesus finishes his sermon, and he turns the spotlight onto his hearers, and he confronts them with their duplicity.

He diagnoses in them their tendency to have spiritual prosopagnosia. Jesus is going to hammer home the follower of their hearing without doing. Their Teflon non-stick hearing, it just washes over their ears.

[8 : 12] And he does this by asking a question in verse 46. A very searching question. He says, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?

Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say? Why do you call me Master, Master, and do not obey what I command? A penetrating question, and one just as searching for us here this morning as it was for those people listening on the plane that day 2,000 years ago.

It's a question that's caused radical discomfort as I've thought about it this week. Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?

Now in the Near East, the idea of having a Master, the idea of having a Lord was very common. People were very familiar with what it was like to have a Kyrios, a Master, a Lord in charge of their lives.

Your entire life as a slave was tied to your Master. your whole existence was one where you had to obey everything that your Master said.

[9 : 33] You had to obey unthinkingly and unquestioningly and uncritically. You had one job, just one job, and your one job was obedience.

You couldn't go and strike, you couldn't ignore, you couldn't have a lazy morning, you couldn't swerve the instruction, your whole life had to be one of faithful obedience to everything your Master demanded.

Jesus here says you understand that in your normal lives, why do you not do it in your spiritual lives? Why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?

He even repeats the word Lord to emphasize their duplicity, their two-facedness. He says you have a real tendency to be unreal in your servant hurts.

There's a disconnection in your discipleship. You'll say you'll follow me, but only when I say nice things. A contradiction in their confession. You call me Lord, Lord, but you don't do what I say? [10:47] Your lips are betrayed by your life. You are all prattle and no practice. Your words are cheap and they have no cash value.

Trusting Jesus like an insurance policy, we want him as a saviour, but we're not that keen on him being our Lord. We'll meet him at the end of life, but we're not too concerned about him interfering with the life that we have on this earth.

Listen to what David Platt says about this tendency in Western Christianity. We Western Christians have a way of taking the Jesus of the Bible and twisting him into a version of Jesus that we are more comfortable with.

A nice middle class Jesus. A Jesus who doesn't mind materialism and would never call us to give away everything we have. A Jesus who is fine with nominal devotion that does not infringe on our comforts.

A Jesus who wants us to be balanced, who wants us to avoid dangerous extremes, and who for that matter wants us to avoid danger altogether. A Jesus who brings comfort and prosperity to us as we live out our Christian spin on the American dream.

[11:58] And that exact same nuance is in Jesus' question to us this morning. Why do you call me Lord Lord? And do not do what I say. Are we guilty of that same remodelling?

As Mark Twain famously said, it isn't those parts of the Bible that I can't understand that bother me. It's the parts that I do. And over the last four weeks, we've had 18 points that anyone could understand, and Jesus stands and asks us, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?

Searching. Jesus calls us to radical, countercultural living in contrast to the way of the world, and once we leave here, we just tend to blend in, and slip to being normal.

Just imagine if we'd really lived out these 18 points over the last four weeks, people would have asked us about our weirdness. Why do you do that? Why do you give without wanting back?

Why is it that you're not as judgmental and condemning as other people in the office? Why is it that when people hurt you, you don't respond? You turn the other cheek?

[13:16] If we really did that, if we really did say, Jesus, you're Lord, Lord, and I want to obey everything you command, how different would we look? But we just sink below the surface and wait for next Sunday.

That's my fear for myself. Jesus calls us to radical difference. He calls us to live like he is Lord of our lives. He calls us to monitor our language, curb our materialism, be blameless in our internet use, careful in our relationships, worshipful in our work, chaste in our intimacy, dependent upon him in everything in prayer, to name but a few.

But all too regularly we carry on regardless. Why do you call me Lord Lord? And do not do what I say. There's a disconnection in our hearing and doing.

And I fear we're all guilty of spiritual proso Pagnosio. And this has been the problem of humanity all along. In Eden they had one rule, one choice to obey or disobey and they chose to disobey.

On Sinai as we just heard with Peter, Moses is up the mountain getting the Ten Commandments the first of which is, do not have any gods before me. And the very next thing they do in the narrative, let's all melt down our jewellery and make a golden calf to worship.

[14:39] That's what happens to the prophets. Ezekiel 33, come and hear the message that has come from the Lord. My people come to you as they usually do and sit before you to hear your words, but they do not put them into practice.

Their mouths speak of love, but their hearts are greedy for unjust gain. Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well. For they hear your words, but they do not do them, but they do not put them into practice. It's how the Old Testament finishes, Malachi chapter 1.

A son honours his father and a slave his master. If I am a father, where is the honour due to me? If I am a master, where is the respect due to me?

And right here we have, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say? obedience is critical. This is not an easy believism.

[15:42] This is Jesus coming into your life to be Lord of your life, to turn it upside down from the inside out and to make you stick out like a healthy thumb in a fallen world.

Jesus doesn't want your endorsement, he doesn't want your vote, he's not after a subscription fee, he is not looking for more fans. Jesus wants your obedience, he wants you to be so mastered by his grace, so responsive to his words, so sensitive to his spirit, that your obedience becomes your overarching desire and your purest delight.

One Lord, do what he says. And Jesus is the very personification of what obedience looks like. He says things like this, my food is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.

By myself I can do nothing. I judge only as I hear and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.

I will not say much more to you now, for the prince of this world is coming, he has no hold over me, but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the father and do exactly what my father has commanded me.

[17:07] The greatest phrase to do with obedience in Jesus' life. Going a little further, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, my father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me, yet not as I will, but as you will.

Jesus perfectly obeys so that he can be our Lord and our saviour. And now in loving response to all that he's done for us, he says, call me Lord, Lord, but live it out in your lives.

Or else there's a real problem. There's a real duplicity if you say, Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say. He then moves on to illustrate with probably the most famous illustration he uses.

It's so famous we have a Sunday school song with actions. And the key is not just the difference between the two men, it is also the similarities.

Similarities are this. They both hear the same word. They both do. One is not more privileged than the other. One is not turned up and the other hasn't.

[18:22] They both hear the same word. they have access to the same message. And seemingly they both build the same house from street level.

It looks identical, a standard two up, two down. Retailing for about £220,000 in Edinburgh. It may even be neighbours occupying the same cul-de-sac.

And they both face the same storms. Jesus. Jesus is not saying if you obey me it will be happy and healthy and wealthy for the rest of your life. You both face the same storms.

Building your life on Jesus and obedience to him does not inoculate you against storms. The Bible never promises a get out of difficulty free card on becoming a Christian.

It is clear from the illustration that they both suffer the same storm. Though the result of the storm is radically different. And here are the differences.

[19:30] They may look small but they make a cataclysmic difference at the end. One, he hears and he obeys. He hears and he puts them into practice.

And the other merely hears. And then has a bout of spiritual prosopagnosia. one hears and his determination is to do what he hears and then just carries on regardless.

And this plays out in the first man digging painstaking foundations, digging down deep, getting right to the bedrock, building his life on obedience to Jesus' words.

And the second man hardly disturbs the topsoil. And you can imagine his neighbors, every time somebody goes past the second man there's all high-fiving going on.

Look how quickly you're building your house, it's amazing. That idiot next door, he spends all of his time deep down dark in a hole which is wet and damp. Will he ever finish?

[20:42] And yet we all know, don't we, the importance of foundations. We all know in all of our lives the importance of building, not just in the immediate but in the future. We all know what it is to see houses all washed away because they weren't built properly.

We all know what it is for financial forecasting to invest now so you can reap a dividend then. We all know the importance of foundations if we ever go to Italy and see the Tower of Pisa that sits 57 meters high but only has 3 meter foundations and that's why it's famous for leaning.

I think if somebody had built it properly no one would ever visit the town of Pisa. In stark contrast the Shard right in the middle of London 310 meters high the tourist building in the UK and its foundations driven down 63 meters.

this man the first man the hearing and obeying man he hears and with great efforts he digs down deep and lays foundation on the rock.

They also have a radically different view of the future. The second man thinks oh the bright sky the sunny days the birds singing that will continue.

[22 : 09] He obviously never lived in Scotland. That will continue. What's the point in weatherproofing my house and building foundations? It's just going to be plain sailing. The second man on the other hand he beamed a storm away.

He knew that the storms may not be seen on the horizon but they would build in a moment. and flash flooding would ensue. And finally the effect of the storm.

Dipolar opposites. The storm rages, the torrent comes, one house is battered but stands firm, one house is battered and is absolutely ruined and completely destroyed.

The first man calls Jesus Lord, Lord Lord and struggles hard to do what he says and the second man calls him Lord, Lord and does not do what he says.

Now the imagery of flooding and storms can definitely refer to bumps in the road of this life. Tragic death, terrifying diagnosis, the unexpected P45 slid across the desk.

[23 : 27] there is definite advantage in building our lives obedient to the Lord Jesus in this life alone. Obedience to Jesus doesn't mean it doesn't hurt or that there isn't fear but it does mean that through our obedience to his call on our lives there is eternal security and impenetrable safety in being a true disciple of Jesus.

I've lost count of how many times during the last seven years of this church when one thing or another has happened and somebody hasn't said I don't know how I would have gotten through it without the Lord. However the imagery of flooding in the Bible is also consistent in being about coming judgment at the end.

It's regularly about the day of the Lord and the judgment he will bring to bear on each of our lives.

The truth then contained in this illustration is therefore of uttermost importance for all of us.

There is a real warning about coming and impending judgment and the only way to stand firm on that day will be to have not only claimed that Jesus is Lord, Lord, but to have struggled hard to obey his words.

It will be a terrifying day to have spent all your life saying Lord, Lord, and never caring one jot about obeying what Jesus calls.

[24 : 55] The only reason we will stand before God and not be judged is whether we've not only confessed Jesus to be Lord, but have worked with all the energy God is able to provide to obey what he says.

Jesus says, I'm not an insurance policy, I'm not just a savior, I also want to be Lord of your life. This is not easy believism. And therefore, the uncomfortable question he asks these people is the uncomfortable question he asks us.

Not to condemn, but to challenge and to change. He says, be very careful if you're calling me Lord, Lord, and not seeking to bring every area of your life in obedience to my command.

A man fell off a 50 story building and was heard by people on the 20th floor to say, so far, so good.

The truth is, many of us think we're getting away with it.

So far, so good. I can put my Sunday face on, my Sunday smile, I can sing with vigor. Jesus says, be very careful.

[26 : 15] You won't get away with it. I need to be Lord and Savior of your life. Build your life, not just in confession upon me, but in obedience to me.

And if you do but try, I will help, I will be honored, and you will know eternal security and impenetrable safety for all eternity.

It's a real wake-up call. And so we finish with this. what Peter says in his first letter in chapter 2, behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious.

And whoever builds his life upon him will not be put to shame. Let's just take a moment together of silence and let's each of us consider this question, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and ask ourselves, are we doing what Jesus asks?

Let's take a moment of quiet. Jesus says to us, why do you call me Lord, Lord, and do not do what I say?

[27 : 38] Father God, we want Jesus to be Lord of our lives. Father, we want to be faithful, robust, and confident servants. So we ask you to confront us with our hypocrisy, to peel back the mask of duplicity, to shine the light of the gospel on the areas of our lives that are not completely surrendered to you.

And we ask that you would transform our desires to align them to yours. Father God, help us be obedient, we pray. For we know you do not delight in burnt offerings of external ritual or sacrifices,

you delight much more in our obedience.

In your sight, obedience is better than sacrifice, and hearing and doing better than the fat of rams.

Father, help us build our lives on Jesus Christ by hearing and doing his word, we pray.

Amen. Amen.