

Being Fruitful and Wise

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[0 : 0 0] Thanks, Charles. Well, as you heard, my name's Jono Smith, and it is my great privilege to be here tonight. I'm going to talk to you about Jesus tonight. That's what I love to do. So it's cool to be here. I'm going to be taking a chunk out of the end of a great sermon that Jesus preached. You just heard it now. We call it the Sermon on the Mount.

So we're going to talk a little bit about that. And for those of you who aren't familiar with Jesus, maybe you're new to church, maybe you're not a Christian, you need to know a couple of things about Jesus before we start, before we hear from him, okay? First thing, first and foremost, most important thing you can know about Jesus is that he is the Son of God, that he came to earth about 2,000 years ago, he died on a cross for our sins, he rose again for our salvation, and he's in heaven now. And the thing is, if we believe in Jesus, if we believe what the Bible says about Jesus and trust in him, then we can spend eternity with him in heaven. That's a pretty cool truth. The second truth you need to get is that Jesus was a tough guy, okay? Jesus was a tough guy. I want to shoot a little myth here tonight.

Jesus was a tough guy. I know you've seen the pictures of him, the paintings of him. He looks like a Miss America contestant. He's kind of skinny, wearing a dress. He's got product and he's long hair. You know, he's got Bible school hands like me, all soft. That's not who Jesus was, okay? Jesus was a tough guy. I don't know how many carpenters you've been around, but Jesus, he grew up, his adopted dad, Joseph, carpenter, he probably grew up swinging a hammer, hanging out with his dad and his brothers. Jesus was a tough guy.

My brother is a carpenter and I know this firsthand. My brother's a tough guy because he's a carpenter. And I've spent a lot of time on building sites. I know these guys. They're not wearing dresses and, you know, they're not giving themselves manicures. These are tough guys. And so when you think about Jesus, you hear the words from Jesus tonight.

I want you to think like hard yakker overalls, red back boots, hard hat, carrying a toolbox to work, right? One eyebrow, well built, tough hands. He's that guy, okay? He's a tough guy.

[2 : 18] And the thing about Jesus is not only was he a tough guy, but he had a really tough teaching at times. He was a tough teacher. I challenge you to go through one of the gospels and mark out where you hear tough things from Jesus. He was a tough teacher. So when I say he was a tough teacher, I don't want you to think he was a bad teacher. I know in our experiences, we tend to think of our tough teachers as the bad teachers. I remember my toughest teacher, Mr. Morgan. Oh, Mr. Morgan. He was our drama teacher. And I thought it'd be cool at the start of the year. This was year 10. Kind of a bit of a punk when I was growing up. You'll get that later on. I thought it'd be cool if I got everyone to start calling him Mad Dog Morgan. And it turned out he didn't really like that that much. And so in order to punish me, he thought he'd punish everyone. And so for the rest of the year, from start to finish, we didn't do any drama at all. No drama. We just sat in a classroom, heads down, memorizing lines out of Shakespeare. That was Mad Dog Morgan. He was a tough teacher, but he was also a little bit psycho. Okay? That's not what I mean. That's not what I mean when I say that Jesus was a tough teacher. He was a tough teacher, but he came with the words of Almighty God. Okay? So his tough teaching aims to get right into our hearts, to convict us of our sin and to make us more godly and more Christ-like. So that's the aim of these words tonight. So I don't want you to be discouraged.

I want you to go home this week and read through one of the gospels like Matthew that I'm going to be speaking from tonight and be encouraged and be challenged by Jesus' tough teaching. I challenge you to do that. Before we get into this tough teaching, I think I'd like to pray for us. I think we need a little prayer before we get these tough words from Jesus. So could everyone bow their heads with me in reverence for God? I'm just going to say a short prayer asking God to bless us in this time. Dear Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for Jesus. We thank you that he lived the life that we could not live, a life without sin, that he died the death that we should have died, the death for sin.

I thank you that he was raised from the dead just like we will be raised from the dead and spend eternity with him if only we'd believe in him. Please bless us now as we hear about laying the right foundation for our lives. Please help us to listen real carefully to what Jesus has to say to us and take it on board for Jesus' sake. Amen.

We'll get straight into the passage now and I'm going to do something a little weird, a little controversial. I'm going to take the last two verses from our Bible reading and I'm going to throw them at the top because I think that's kind of a good, it'll make a good introduction for what I have to say tonight. So I'm going to take verses 28 and 29. If you've got a Bible, I'd love to follow along with me so that we can learn together.

My translation is a little bit different to yours, so don't freak out if there's some different words. I'm actually smarter than I look, so I can read. I've got that bit down. Yeah. So let's start at verse 28 and 29. Follow along with me.

[5 : 36] And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowd were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority and not as their scribes. First thing we need to get about Jesus is that he spoke with authority. Jesus is the best preacher that's ever lived and ever will live on the earth. Jesus is a great teacher. And the people that are around in these days, the preachers that are around in these days, they tended to be boring preachers. It might be like some of you who didn't grow up going to this church. Maybe you got dragged along to another church by your parents and you grew up listening to boring preachers and you had to kind of endure it every week. That's what these people had to do back in this day. They had to go and hear preachers who just sort of quoted other preachers. That's all they did. And what Jesus came, he came and what he did, he came and he didn't do that. He spoke directly from God's word and he spoke with authority.

So that's why these people, when they heard what he said, they were stunned. Stunned by his amazing teaching. Now I get, I know you get to hear Dr. Paul Barker each week or most weeks, right? He's, he's got a reputation for being a Bible preacher and he is, he's a really good preacher. And so I don't mean any offense when I say that he has got nothing on Jesus when it comes to preaching. Jesus was the best preacher that's ever lived. I love preaching. I love talking about Jesus and I will never, ever, ever, ever, ever, ever, never, ever, ever, ever be as God as Jesus when it comes to preaching.

He spoke with authority. That's what we need to get. So with that in our minds, knowing that Jesus is about to speak to us with authority, let's pick it up from verse 15. Go back up. Verse 15.

Jesus says, beware of false prophets who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. First thing Jesus says is we need to be alert for false prophets. Prophets in these days, in the biblical times, especially the old Testament were people that God used to speak to the people of God.

So God would choose a prophet, say Isaiah or Jeremiah, he would choose a prophet. He would say, this is what you need to tell my people, the people of Israel. And he would say, you need to let them know that I love them or that, you know, there's no other gods apart from me or that I want them to do this or that. I want them to fight in this battle. I want them to set up a town in this area.

[8 : 04] That's what prophets did. They took the words of God that he spoke directly to them. And then he told the people the truth about God. And so false prophets, the prophets that Jesus says we have to be aware of, they're the exact opposite. Okay. They come with lies and they say it's from God. They say things that aren't true about God. And they say, well, this is really what God's about, but really they're lying. Jesus says we have to be very careful and alert to who those people are. These people in your life today might be your family, brothers, sisters, your friends, your teachers. It could be anybody who tells you lies about God, people who discourage you from reading your Bible, telling you the Bible's not really true. People who tell you that Jesus isn't the son of God. People who tell you that there are many paths to God, many different religions that you ought to check out. People who encourage you to sin. These people are false prophets. Could be famous people today. I'll give you an example.

This is my favorite example of a false prophet, Oprah Winfrey, right? I don't know if you know this. Oprah's got the biggest cult in the world. Millions and millions of deceived housewives and students who should be at work, right? And one of my favorite quotes from Oprah is, she said, this is serious, she said, the greatest mistake anyone can ever make is to say that there is only one way to God.

That's what Oprah thinks. And then over against that, we have Jesus. We sung it earlier, one way, Jesus. Jesus says, I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me.

So you need to decide, are you going to follow the false prophet? Or are you going to follow Jesus, the Son of God? See, Jesus knew that we would be having false prophets coming out of the woodwork in our lives, whether it's on TV or at school. And so he says, be aware of these people. Now, you might say, these are just normal people that you're talking about. My brothers, my sisters, my teachers, Oprah. She's not that normal, but you know what I'm talking about. Normal people who might come to deceive you. But that's Jesus' point, isn't it? Jesus says, beware of false prophets.

They come to you in sheep's clothing. So they look like your average, normal sheep, harmless, you know, fluffy, woolly. But really on the inside, they're ravenous wolves who are seeking to destroy you and lead you astray, to ruin your faith. So that's his point. These people look like normal people, but really they're liars who have come to deceive you about God. Let's pick up the next verse.

[11 : 04] Verse 16 to 20, we'll take it in a chunk. You might say, how do we know who these false prophets are? If they look like everyone else, how do we know who are the false prophets and who are the true prophets? Jesus explains how you can know. He says, you will recognize them by their fruits.

Are grapes gathered from thorn bushes or figs from thistles? So every healthy tree bears good fruit, but the diseased tree bears bad fruit. A healthy tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a diseased tree bear good fruit.

Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Thus, you will recognize them by their fruits. Jesus is saying this, these people are going to come to you. They're false prophets.

They're going to try and get you to stop loving me. The way to tell them that the false prophet from the true prophet or the truth teller from the liar is to look at their fruits, to look at the outcome of their lives.

Okay? So the reason we can tell that your leaders here, Lisa and others, Paul, the leaders of your church, Wayne, the reason we can tell that they're not false prophets is because they speak to you about the Bible.

[12 : 21] They teach you from the Bible. They talk to you about Jesus and encourage you to be Christ-like. They pray with you and come alongside of you. That's how you know that they're not false prophets.

You see, false prophets know this, so they're going to come alongside you as well and tell you that they love you and tell you that they love Jesus. But in the end, Jesus says, you'll be able to find out from the outcome of their lives.

Are they really teaching you about Jesus? Are they taking you through the Bible? Are they really praying with you that you would become more like Jesus? You've got to look at the fruits, the outcome of their lives.

And so I'd ask you guys, some of you aspire to be leaders, maybe youth leaders or leaders of churches or ministers even. So you need to ask yourselves, what kind of fruit am I producing?

What kind of fruit am I producing? Do I love God? Do I talk to other people about Jesus? Do I read my Bible? It's something to think about.

[13 : 33] Jesus said, you'll know them and recognize them by their fruits. I'll say this too. What I'm not saying, I just don't want you to misunderstand.

I'm not saying that you need to be a perfect person or that your leaders need to be perfect Christians because there's no such thing. Only Jesus is perfect. But if we aspire to be leaders and if we aspire to be prophets, that is, people who speak the truth about God, we need to make sure that we're living lives worthy of that calling.

Reading our Bible, praying, speaking to people about Jesus, that kind of thing. Let's move on. Take a look at verse 24 to 27.

Sorry, back it up. I'm ahead of myself here. Let's take a look at verse 21 to 23. Jesus says, You heard me say that Jesus is a tough teacher and I think this makes my top 10.

This makes my top three of tough things that Jesus has said. This is a really tough thing to say. I never knew you. And I want to dwell on this because I want to get to the next part of the passage where Jesus talks about building our life on the right foundation.

[15 : 17] But it's just enough to say that. Though there might be people with big churches, people who are great preachers, people with great youth groups who say they love Jesus.

Jesus' point is that not everyone who says they love Jesus actually does. There are going to be people on the last day when Jesus comes, he's going to judge everyone.

And there are going to be people who say, Lord, Lord, remember all the good stuff I did in your name? And to some of them, he's going to say, I never knew you.

Away from me. We need to get that. We need to feel that. And it gives you even more weight when you realize that in the Bible, when an address to someone is repeated, like Lord, Lord, the double thing, that's an indication of intimacy.

Okay? So these people are saying, Lord, we love you. We know you. We're good buddies. Jesus still says, I never knew you. The point is that there are going to be people just like the false prophets who come and say that they love Jesus.

[16 : 29] They're going to have great ministries, heaps of people. You know, everyone's downloading the sermons on the internet. They're getting famous. But what Jesus' point is, don't be gullible.

Don't just listen and hear everything you hear about God and take it on board as truth. I'll let you in on a secret. Not everything on the internet is true. Okay?

If you Google Jesus, not everything that you read about Jesus is going to be true. So Jesus says, don't be gullible. I have a feeling that some of us today are a little bit too gullible with what we believe about God.

And we just haven't done the hard work of knowing our Bible, knowing who God is. And so we get taken in a little bit too easily by false prophets and people who say they love Jesus, but actually don't.

Let's move on to the parable that Jesus says in 24 to 27. This is a great parable.

[17 : 28] Listen real careful to this. He says, Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. 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.

And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man. Just let me cut in there. This is cool. I love this.

Foolish man. In the Greek, the New Testament was originally written in Greek. Foolish man. And the word there is moro. And that's where we get the word moron. I love that word. So let me back up.

And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a moron who built his house on the sand. I love that. 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.

This is one of the reasons Jesus is a great preacher. He has really, really good illustrations, parables and stories. And I'll just explain a little bit about what this story means.

[18 : 41] I think most of you would have heard it before. Let me give you a little geology lesson. Rock. Rock is good. Rock is solid. It's been around for billions of years. It's compacted.

It's hard. It is rock. Right? Sand is the exact opposite. It moves around a lot. It's very porous and it gets blown about in the ocean.

And when floods come, sand just scatters. It's not that good a thing to build on. Easily shifts. And what Jesus is saying here is the rock that the wise man built his house on, the rock that the wise man built his life on, is the rock of faith in Jesus Christ, the God of the Bible.

That's the rock he wants you to build your life on. That's the wise man. The moron. He went and built his life, built his life on the sand.

The sand represents the world and false religions and fads and everything that's going on outside of Christianity, really. He went and did what a lot of people are doing and building their life on the culture, which shifts all the time, just like the sand.

[19 : 58] And so Jesus says the wise man is the one that built his life on the rock. Faith in Jesus Christ. I want to share a little bit of my story with you because it's pretty illustrative of this point.

And my parents, I want to honor my dad, he just walked in down the back there. My dad's a great man, a Christian guy. And my mum and dad raised me on the rock. They built, started my life right from when I was a kid on the rock.

Faith in Jesus Christ. So they used to read the Bible to me and pray with me and take me to church and just set my foundation there. And that was great. Up until I was about 15.

And then I started looking at people who had built their lives on the sand, things of this world. And I thought, you know, that just looks a whole lot cooler than sitting in church each week and reading my Bible.

And so what I did was something really foolish and moronic. And I picked up my house, my life. I moved it onto the sand. I walked away from church and from God's word and from prayer.

[21 : 00] And I settled on the sand. And it was quite cool for a while being on the sand with everyone else, my friends at school. And that was until a really big storm hit my life.

I was 19, so I'd had four or five years of living on the sand. And I'd gone to America and I'd gone to work there. And within about two weeks, a whole big storm hit my life.

And a bunch of stuff happened. And my granddad died. He was one of my best buddies. And I broke up with my girlfriend. And I nearly died from a fever that I had at the time.

And I got fired. And a bunch of stuff just culminated in these two weeks like a storm. And I wasn't on the rock. I didn't have faith in Jesus to keep me going.

I didn't have faith in a God that helped me understand why this stuff was going on. And so I just got washed out. And the cool thing is, because God is gracious.

[22 : 07] This is true for you guys too who think, Man, I think I am on the sand and this is dangerous. God is gracious. And I picked myself up, or he picked me up, more rightly. And he set me down on the rock again.

And he gave me my Bible back in a big way. I started reading my Bible, building the foundation on the rock again. And ever since, that's all I've been about. And I feel like I'm on the rock.

And storms have hit me since then, big storms. But I've been on the rock. I've had my Bible. I've had a Heavenly Father who I can speak to about this stuff. And it's proved to be so worthwhile.

And you might be sitting there saying, That's cool for losers like you who have storms in their lives. You might be doing pretty well. But let me tell you, the storms of life will hit you in a big way.

You guys at high school, it feels like things are great. You might enjoy school, but nothing really bad is going on. Let me tell you, the storms of life come and will come, even if it's on your deathbed.

[23 : 06] And that's the first storm that's hit you. That's a pretty big storm. The storm of death is really the ultimate storm, isn't it? That's the one that really knocks us down.

But Jesus says, if you've built your life on the rock, then death only means eternal life. It's a cool thing to remember. So we would encourage you and exhort you and commend you and command you to build your life on the rock.

Build your life in the faith of Jesus Christ. Know that he is your God. Know your Bible. When the storms of life come, you'll be okay.

Okay. It's sort of an illustration. You guys know the Tower of Pisa? Tower of Pisa? The leaning Tower of Pisa? It was built in 1147, right?

Hundreds of years ago. And it was built as part of a cathedral. These church guys thought it would be cool to build a big tower as part of the cathedral. And the wise builders sort of had a plan that it should be on a rock, just like Jesus said.

[24 : 12] But there were a bunch of morons there who said, no, it's going to look a whole lot cooler if we build this on the sand on the riverbank. You know, we'll have the river flowing past it and it'll be the Tower of Pisa.

Everyone will talk about it. It'll be awesome. Anyway, it took 147 years to build. And a third of the way through, the foundations collapsed into the sand because they built it on the sand on this river.

And so instead of saying, man, okay, this was a stupid idea. What we're going to do is deconstruct it, move it onto the rock, build it again.

It'll be good as gold. They didn't do that. They said, oh, why don't we just compensate for it? And they started building it off to the side to kind of balance out the fact that it was about to fall over.

A lot of you guys might be doing this with your life that's built on the sand. It's starting to shake a bit. You're starting to find out that the sand isn't going to hold you up. The things of this world aren't going to hold you up. And instead of saying, all right, Jesus, I understand now.

[25 : 11] I'm going to build my life on the rock. Instead of doing that, what you're doing is just kind of compensating for it. So instead of getting drunk every night of the week, you're just doing it on weekends. Or, you know, instead of cheating on all your girlfriends, you know, you're being faithful to one and cheating on the rest.

That doesn't make sense. You know what I mean. The point is, you might be compensating for the fact that you're on the sand. That's what these guys did.

And they kept building it. And you know what? It's been up for hundreds of years. But I was reading one scientist who has predicted that it's only a matter of years before it crashes and the whole thing is gone.

Because they built it on the sand like the foolish builder instead of on the rock. Jesus says, because he loves you, build your house on the rock.

So just in conclusion, and I know I've gone over time and you guys have been great. If you don't like me, don't worry, I won't be here next week. You'll get your regular guy back. But it's been great to be here.

[26 : 23] I love speaking about Jesus and it's been cool to speak to you about building your life on the right foundation, not doing what I did as a moron. Be the wise builder.

So what does it look like to build your house on the rock? Just a few points. Firstly, as Jesus said, you need to look out for the wolves.

You need to look out for false prophets. You might be invited to other churches, other youth groups where you hear a lot of hype and you see a lot of people and that could be really good.

I just want you to listen in though and test what they're saying. Do they have good fruit? What's the outcome of their lives? That sort of thing. Same with new friends at school, friends who are telling you weird things about Jesus you're not sure about.

Come to youth group, ask Lisa and the other leaders and just test those kind of things against God's word which is always true. Secondly, read God's word.

[27 : 24] You've got to read your Bible. You've got to be really familiar with the Bible. God wants you to know the Bible really well so that when those things come you can test those kind of teachings against the Bible.

And keep this real simple. The way God speaks to us is through the Bible and the way we speak to God is through prayer. So God wants you to read your Bible. It's not just a bunch of kids stories, Sunday school stories.

It's the words of God and it's the way that we build our life on the rock. So get into your Bible. Thirdly, God wants you to pray. Keep this real simple as well. I never got it this simply when I was at church.

Maybe I wasn't listening. I wasn't. So listen now. Prayer is really simple. We have a loving father. Where is children? And just like a loving father, we can go to him with anything.

We can just speak to him at any time, day or night, and he'll listen to us. We can, you know, speak really long prayers, short prayers, just how you're doing, some heavier prayers.

[28 : 25] You know, you've got something on your mind, you can speak to God about that. He's a loving father and he wants to hear from us. That's another way that we build our sure foundation on the rock. And finally, I just encourage you to keep coming to church.

Keep coming to the youth services. Keep coming to church as much as you can. Keep going to youth group. Listen to the sermons. One of the biggest reasons I moved from the rock to the sand was that I just didn't listen to sermons.

I didn't pray to God. I didn't read my Bible. I didn't get along to youth group and hear what they had to say. Come along to the camp and invite your friends to the camp. If you've got friends who are building their life on sand and you don't want them to self-destruct, bring them to camp and they can hear about Jesus and get their life on the rock.

So keep coming to church. Listen to Paul. Listen to the preachers. And that's one of the best ways we can shore up our foundation on the rock. I might leave it there but I'd love to pray for us before I finish.

So why don't we bow our heads and I'll do that. Loving Father, we thank you so much that you love us.

[29 : 31] That we love you because you loved us first. Lord, please help us to take seriously the Bible. Please help us to take it off our shelf when we get home and to read it, to get into it, to study it.

Lord, help us to come to you in prayer at any time knowing that you are our loving Father who wants to hear from us. Lord, please help us to watch out for those wolves who even though they look like sheep want to destroy us and lead us away from you the way, the truth and the life.

Lord God, please encourage us to keep coming back to church week by week. Help us to learn. Help us to get involved. Help us to bring our friends along so that they might know how to build their life on the rock of Jesus Christ.

I pray all these things in His name. Amen.