

“The Stability of Obedience” | Sermon on the Plain – Preaching Draft- Sermon 6 (Luke 6:43-45)

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(Discussion questions on page 12)

Please turn to Sermon on the Plain - Preaching Draft - Sermon 5, which is on page 863 of your pew bible, or page 6 of the service bulletin, if you are new to the bible, the big numbers are the chapters and the little ones are the verses. Please turn there so that you can follow along with me, to make sure what I am saying lines up with what God says.

Intro

Ocean Tower was a 31-story condominium in South Padre Island, in Texas, which began construction in 2006. It was designed as a luxury high-rise, featuring 147 residential units, a gym, swimming pools, spa, and a media room. It was designed to withstand extreme winds with three massively reinforced core walls. The location was to have allowed the residences to have views across the Gulf of Mexico. Units were meant to be sold for \$2 million each.¹ It all sounded perfect.

But Ocean Tower had a problem. Shortly after construction began, the building started to sink and lean due to the unstable soil underneath, which was a mix of sand and expansive clays that couldn't bear the structure's weight. By 2009, the incomplete tower had to be demolished. The failure of Ocean Tower, serves as a harsh lesson about the importance of robust foundation planning in construction.²

Context

If you have just joined us we are at the end of a series looking at Jesus' sermon on the plain in the book of Luke. We have heard blessings, and woes, we have heard how we should love, and not judge.

Last week we heard about the spiritual gardening we need to do to identify if we are producing bad thorns or good fruit. This week we turn to building houses and hear how obedience to Jesus leads to an unshakable life. A life that is able to withstand the pressures and difficulties of this life all that it brings with it.

I am going to work through this passage in three parts.

First,

1. The Reason for love

Second,

¹ [Ocean Tower - Wikipedia](#)

² [Learn About Extreme Cases of Foundation Failure \(structuredfoundation.com\)](#)

2. The Rule of Love
- Third,
3. The Result of Love

1. Point 1 - The Reason for love

So, first, superficial faith.

What does the text say?

Our text opens with a question from Jesus.

Listen to this question in verse 46 with me again,

⁴⁶“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”

It’s a pretty simple question.

He is confronting people who call him “Lord”, but fail to do what he says.

These people acknowledge that he is a ruler with authority. But they fail to submit their lives under his rule.

This is a simple question, but it drives deep into the soul.

I have been wrestling with this question in my own heart. It has been turning over and over in my head. As I lay in my bed awake. As I scroll on my phone. As I play with my kids. These words of Jesus have been ringing in my head, Michael, ⁴⁶“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”

What does the text mean?

Jesus is making a point that some people have superficial faith. Faith that says yes to his face, but no behind his back.

By all appearances these people seem to be sincere. They say the right things. They address Jesus with respect and dignity.

But their faith lacks depth, and when you dig just a little bit, you see that their faith is merely superficial. It looks good on the surface, but is rotten to the core.

Now, these people seem to be listening to Jesus.

Notice the context of this passage, Jesus is speaking to disciples and people who have come out to hear him.

They are all gathered around to hear the word of God. They might have prayed and sung together, just like we are this morning.

They have come to hear what he has to say, they probably even agree and approve it.

But as one pastor says, it is like they are listening to a flight attendant giving the safety instructions before the plane takes off.

I've been on a few planes in my time, and in the early days of flying I would be vigilant in listening to the flight attendant. Listening to every word they said and making sure I knew where my nearest exit was. But now, I barely pay attention. I think 'yeah, yeah, yeah, nearest exit, put my mask on first, blow the whistle! I get it, let's get moving already!'³

It can be just as easy to ignore the words of God.

And so, while they may confess with their lips that Jesus is Lord, they deny him in their lives. Their conduct, the way they live, does not line up with their faith and belief.

Their faith is merely superficial.

It looks good on the outside, but it has no foundation, it has no grounding, and it is completely fragile. It is simply a façade; a disguise they are wearing to cover up what is really going on underneath.

In essence what Jesus is asking, is why do you lie to me?
Because that is what they are doing.

One commentator notes; if you are saying "no Lord" then he isn't really your Lord. Something else has power over you, which you are submitting to rather than Jesus.

We see this play out with Jesus and his disciple, Peter.

In both Matthew and Mark's gospels, we read the scene where immediately after confessing that Jesus is Lord, Peter denies that Jesus must suffer and die.

Listen to this from Matthew 16:21-23,

²¹ From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.

²² Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. **"Never, Lord!"** he said. **"This shall never happen to you!"**

²³ Jesus turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the concerns of God, but merely human concerns." (NIV)

In this instance we see that Peter's faith is merely superficial.

He is calling Jesus lord, but refusing to submit to his will and authority.

³ R Kent Hughes Sermon on this passage.

Peter has his own ideas about what Jesus should be doing, and Peter is putting himself over and above Jesus.

'I hear what you say Jesus, but I know better than you.'

'Oh, bless your heart, Jesus, you may be God, but I'm pretty clever and I know a thing or two.'

Superficial faith says 'yes' 'yes' to Jesus' words, but fails to let him be in charge of your life. It is mere intellectual ascent, without letting it change what you do.

How does it apply?

I wonder if this speaks to you?

Maybe you say all the right things, you know all the right doctrines,
You have read the bible front to back and back to front.
But your heart just isn't in it.

But some of you might be thinking, "Yes! I am so glad our pastor is taking it to those hypocrites! Those people over there, they really need to hear this word."

This is what I think sometimes.

The danger with that attitude, as we saw a couple of weeks ago, is that while they might have a speck in their eye, you are walking around with a massive plank in your own eye.

We all need to hear this word from Jesus.

Not just them over there, but even us in here. Even you. And even me!

We are all guilty of failing to listen. Of failing to really hear Jesus and let his words dwell within us, and work on our head (what we think), our heart (what we believe), and our hands (what we do). We are all guilty of having superficial faith.

2. Point 2 - The Rule of Love

The corrective to superficial faith, bring us to our second point, stable obedience.

In verses 47 and 48, we are presented with a different way to live.

Jesus shows us how obedience to him is like building a house that has a strong and stable foundation.

Look at verses 47 and 48 with me,

⁴⁷Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: ⁴⁸he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.

What does the text say?

Well, last week we had a gardening themed parable, this week we have a construction themed one.

But you'll be happy to know that I didn't take my kids out to build a house for the sake of illustration. Though Jonathan would have loved that and has been talking constantly about getting construction trucks so we can build a house boat playground, whatever that might be.

But as we just heard, this parable explains that the person who comes, hears, and does what Jesus says, is like a man who was building a house, who didn't just put a structure on top of the land they wanted to build on, no, first he dug deep and laid a solid foundation for his house on rock. This foundation created such stability that when a flood came and waters crashed against it, it was not shaken.

What does the text mean?

Here we see the stability of obedience.

When you don't only listen, but you also obey, you are laying for yourself a foundation that can never be shaken.

I want to think about two reasons why obedience to Jesus creates stability.

First, because you are building with the right set of plans.

Second, because you are building on the right type of ground.

a. The Right Plans

It doesn't matter what you are building, if you are using the wrong plans, it is always going to end poorly.

Think of it like someone trying to put together a set of bunk beds they bought from Ikea, but instead of looking at the instructions for the bunk beds, they are using the instructions intended for a bookcase.

Or imagine someone wanting to go on a vacation to the most beautiful city in the world. So, where do they want to go? That's right, Sydney, Australia. They book their flights, they book their accommodation overlooking the harbor, they have tickets for a concert at the Opera House. They are so excited! But in their excitement, they get a little confused and somehow end up on a flight to Sydney, Nova Scotia, Canada. Now I've never been, and I'm sure it's a lovely place, but that wasn't the plan.

If you have the wrong plans, you just end up in a mess.

The world offers us so many good plans of how to live your life.

But even the most well-meaning, the nicest sounding, the most loving, the most logical ideas or causes, can lead us in the wrong direction.

These plans can be so tempting. As Eve found out the garden, the things of the world can be good for food, and a delight to the eyes, and desired to make one wise.

This is because our hearts are so distorted that we constantly confuse good for evil, and evil for good.

We mix up our blessings with our woes.

We think blessed are you who are rich, and full, and who laugh, and are liked.

And woe to you who are poor and needy, hungry and thirsty, weeping and wailing, hated and reviled.

Even though Jesus says the opposite.

It is all too easy to build with the wrong type of plans.

To follow the plans of the world, the flesh, or the devil.

To build something that looks good to the watching world, but has not stability or structural integrity.

Obedience to Jesus is building with the right set of plans.

Because Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life.

Jesus' way of equal parts justice and mercy, of the death and resurrection, of judgement and redemption, the way of the cross; is the only right way to live.

Living Jesus' way is the always the right way.

That means whenever you are obeying him, you are building your life with the right set of plans.

b. The Right Ground

But not only do you need the right plans, you also need to make sure you are building in the right place, and on the right ground.

Sure, you could be doing the right thing, you may well be obeying Jesus, but for the wrong reasons, with the wrong motives.

You might be loving your enemies, and doing good to those who hate you.

But you are doing it so that your reward would be great in this life.

So often we can build our whole lives on the wrong ground.

Maybe it's a lie we tell ourselves, or maybe it is the lies we hear from the voices we listen to.

We trick ourselves into thinking we are doing well,

When in reality we are far from it.

Eventually the house that we have built on the wrong ground, though it looks good and stands up when times are good, will be exposed.

As soon as the slightest storm comes, if it is not built upon a solid foundation, it will completely crumble.

When you are truly listening to and obeying Jesus, that is when you are building upon solid ground. That is when you are building on the truth.
Ground which can withstand any test.

This work of obedience is not easy. It doesn't come naturally and it is not flashy.
It requires digging deep.
It is a labor, which in this life, is never complete.

How does it apply?

Do you have the right plans?
And are you building those plans upon the right ground?

2. Point 3 - The Result of Love

Third, for those who do not obey Jesus there are serious consequences.

Look at verse 49 with me again,

⁴⁹But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."

What does the text say?

There are a lot of similarities between these two builders.
They both might even have had the right set of plans.
Once these houses were completed they may have looked exactly the same.

During the process, you might have even thought if you walked by, that the builder of this second house was a better builder because his house was going up faster.

And notice that both of these builders faced trials in life. Jesus doesn't say, that the house with the solid foundation won't face trials. Both of these houses will be tested by trial.
But when the storm came against this second house, immediately it fell and its ruin was great.

What does the text mean?

Building a house without a foundation is dangerous.
How much more is building a life without a foundation.

What will happen to your life when the stream breaks against it.
You are barely holding it together as it is.
What will happen when the storm comes?
Will your life stand?
Or will your ruin be great?

So, what ought we to do?

Well we have heard over the past few weeks exactly what Jesus tells us to do.

We are to live for later, seeking the rewards of heaven. Weeping now, that we might rejoice later.

We are to love our enemies, and pray for those who are against us.

We are to forgive, and give generously.

But the reality is that each and every person is guilty of disobeying God. We all fall into the category of people who Jesus is asking this question to.

Last week John told us that a parable is not just trying to **say** something, but it is trying to **do** something.

So, we must ask, what is Jesus trying to do when he tells us this parable.

First as we have seen he is undoubtedly trying to produce obedience.

But I think there is more. I think he is trying to produce conviction, which leads to repentance and greater faith.

1. Conviction/Repentance

There is a danger, when we hear a passage like this, to think;

‘ok, I need to be better in order that I might be acceptable to God. I need to be more obedient so that God would love me.’

But God doesn’t just want you to tick obedience off a list.

- ‘Created an enemy, tick! Perfect, now I can love them. Tick!’
- ‘Got the log out of my eye. Tick! Great now I can take that pesky speck out of my friend’s eye. Tick!’

That’s not the point!

God doesn’t just want your obedience, he wants your heart.

He wants to be the desires of heart.

He wants to be in relationship with you.

He wants you to be obedient out of love, not out of duty.

By asking this question, he wants you to realize that you haven’t perfectly obeyed him.

You haven’t always listened and done what he has said.

By the work of the Holy Spirit, he wants to convict you,

and come to realize that you need help, that you desperately need a savior.

He does this not so that you would feel guilt and shame,

but in order to lead you to repentance.

He wants you to realize that his way is the only way,

his truth is the only truth,

His foundation is the only one that will stand up to the difficulties of this life.

And through repentance he wants to lead you away from sin,
and towards the stability of obedience.

When I say repentance is not a one-time event, that only happens at the moment of conversion when you become a Christian.

Repentance is the life's work of Christian discipleship.

As Martin Luther said in the first of his 95 Theses,

"When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, ``Repent" (Mt 4:17), he willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance."

So, what I mean by repentance is doing the long hard work of digging deep into your heart to see whether you are building your house, your life, on a solid foundation.

2. Believe

As you do that work of repentance, of digging up whatever bad foundation you have and laying a solid one, do so believing and trusting in Jesus.

That he really is that solid ground, that firm foundation, your cornerstone.

That he is the only one who has the words of eternal life.

That he is the only one upon which you can build a solid foundation.

That he came to die the death that you were supposed to die, for your sin and rebellion against him.

Believe that he has taken your sins upon his shoulders.

That you might receive forgiveness, and life everlasting.

Believe that though he died, death could not hold him down, and he is risen.

That he has ascended to the right hand of the father to reign forevermore.

This is what we call the gospel. The good news of Jesus Christ.

That though you fail time and time again to obey Jesus.

Though you fight against him with every fiber of your being when he tells you what to do.

Though you reject and deny his rule over your life by your actions.

And though you do not deserve any of it.

Jesus comes to you, and he willingly gives his life, that you might be rescued from death.

And so that you might enjoy restored and reconciled relationship with God,

Living and dwelling in his house with him, forever.

Conclusion

If you aren't a Christian, I hope that you hear Jesus' words, and think about what kind of life are you building for yourself.

Does it have a foundation? Or is it simply all for show, and prone to crumble at the first sight of a storm?

If you are already a Christian, then I want you to continue to hear Jesus' words, and let them work on your heart. Don't just think about the things you need to do, but contemplate why it is you are not obedient to God. Let Christ's word dwell in you richly, that they might do the important work of conviction, and through repentance it might produce greater faith and trust in Jesus.

Let me pray for us.

Discussion Questions:

1. Looking at the context of this passage, who is Jesus speaking to when he asks his question in verse 46?
2. What does Jesus say are the positive consequences of listening and obeying him?
3. What does Jesus say are the negative consequences of not obeying him?
4. Why do **you** call Jesus Lord, but not do what he tells you?
 - a. What are some things that get in the way of your obedience to Jesus?
5. Are you building your life on a solid foundation? Is your life able to withstand a flood or storm?
6. In light of this passage, what should you do?
 - a. What does greater obedience to Jesus look like for you?
 - b. Will you ever be perfectly obedient to Jesus?⁴
 - c. If not, what do you need to repent of/how do you need to trust God more?

⁴ The answer is; not in this life. We cannot obtain perfect obedience in this life. This is because although we are free from the power and penalty of sin, we are not yet free from its presence. Sin doth remain, always. Until, that is, we are resurrected and revealed in our glorified bodies. Only when we are in the life that is to come, with Jesus face to face, will we be able to perfectly obey him.