



Building Foundations:

I. Introduction

When architects plan a new building, one of the first considerations is the foundation. If the foundation is not solid, then the building will be unsafe. A building with a poor foundation may look fine at first, but when an earthquake or flood comes, it will collapse. It is also important for us to build our lives on a solid foundation that will not crumble or shift when trouble comes. Today, we will learn about the very best foundation for our lives. Our text is the last part of the Sermon on the Plain, Luke 6:37-49.

II. Scripture Luke 6:37-49 (NIV)

[37] "Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. [38] Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you." [39] He also told them this parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? [40] A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher. [41] "Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? [42] How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,' when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye. [43] "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor does a bad tree bear good fruit. [44] Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thornbushes, or grapes from briars. [45] The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks. [46] "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? [47] I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. [48] He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. [49] 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 complete."

III. Teaching

When lifeguards are trained, one of the things they learn is that they must be very careful when they approach a drowning person. A drowning person often panics, and in their desperation to save themselves, they may climb on top and push the lifeguard down under the water. Unfortunately, some people act in a similar way in their relationships. Perhaps they are very defensive because of bad experiences they have had, or perhaps they learned bad relationship habits from someone else. Whatever the cause, these people try to hold themselves up by pushing everyone else down.



Pushing others down often takes the form of being very critical of what other people say and do. Most of us know people who seem to always be complaining and criticizing. These people seem to always be pointing a finger at someone else and accusing them. Not only individuals, but also groups, and even churches, can have this kind of critical attitude. In order to hold themselves up, they push everyone else down with harsh words. The Pharisees are often used as an example of such a group, but we need to remember that there is a little bit of Pharisee in all of us. Some people struggle with this more than others, but none of us are immune from the temptation to be critical of others while ignoring our own faults.



We need to look in the mirror carefully and consider what Jesus says in **Luke**

6:41, “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?” This is a strong warning to check our own attitudes carefully before correcting others. At the same time, it is clear that Jesus does not intend for His followers to completely stop correcting others. **Luke 6:42b** says, **“You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.”** Do you feel the need to correct someone? Before doing so, carefully check your own heart. Make sure your motives are right and that nothing is blocking your own vision. And then, if it is really necessary, lovingly and gently provide the necessary correction, with prayer and encouragement.

Just before these verses, **Luke 6:39-40** says, **“He also told them this parable: “Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.”** If you have a good teacher, then it is good to become like your teacher. But I don't think this comment about teachers is placed after the comment about the blind leading the blind by accident. Jesus is warning us about blind teachers; especially those who are very critical of others and are who are blind to love, mercy, and compassion. If we follow such a teacher, we will learn the same wrong attitudes and critical habits. We may think that we can learn some good things from a teacher without picking up their bad habits, but if we follow a teacher long enough, we will become like them, including their bad habits.

We all need to learn from others, but we need to be careful who we learn from. Jesus also speaks of trees with good and bad fruit. We want to choose teachers, who show the good fruit of love and compassion in their own lives, so that we will also learn love and compassion. You can often tell a lot about a person's heart from their words. Words often reveal heart attitudes. **Luke 6:45, “The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart. For out of the overflow of his heart his mouth speaks.”**

Jesus expects His followers to use discernment and to recognize bad teaching and wrong attitudes. So Jesus is not teaching that we should approve of or ignore immoral lifestyles or false teaching. And yet, Jesus says very strongly, **Luke 6:37, “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”** So, we should never condemn a person, as if their sins were worse than our own sins, but instead we should remember that we all sin in many ways and need the grace of God. If there is an error that needs to be corrected, then we should gently correct the error, but always with humility, mercy and love, forgiving the person.

Jesus gives us a wonderful example in **Luke 23:34a**, as He was being crucified, **“Jesus said, ‘Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.’”** The soldiers were killing Jesus and mocking Him. Jesus certainly did not approve of their actions. And yet, Jesus prayed for them, saying, **“they do not know what they are doing.”** The soldiers probably thought Jesus was just another criminal. They didn't understand that Jesus was completely innocent; they didn't know that He is the King of Glory.

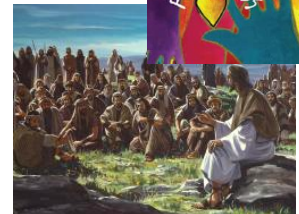


People who do terrible things often do not really understand what they are doing. In some strange way, they believe that what they are doing is right. If we see the situation clearly, sometimes we can correct the wrong. But we should not condemn the person. Instead we should show grace and mercy in all humility. We need to remember that if we came from the same background and had the same experiences, then, it might be us doing the very same wrong.

Luke 6:38 tells us, **“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”** The image here comes from the market place. Imagine going to the market. At the marker, you decide to buy a scoop of grain or sugar. But how much that is depends on the size of the scoop and on whether the merchant shakes it and presses it down. You hold up the front of your robe so that the merchant can scoop it into your lap for you to carry it home. You soon learn which merchants give you full measure and which ones are skimpy.

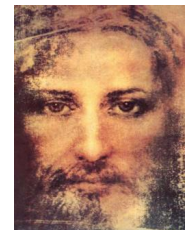
This verse is often used to teach about tithes and offerings, and we certainly should be generous in our tithes and offerings. In fact, in the modern church, a person's generosity in giving is a key indicator of their spiritual health. Some people are in special circumstances, but in general, if you want to check on your own spiritual health and maturity, then you can take a look at your own giving. How generous are you are in tithes and offerings to the Lord? Do you give, **"A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over?"** There is much more to spiritual health than giving, but this does reveal our heart condition.

It is a powerful image and we should examine ourselves carefully. But when we look at the context, I don't think Jesus was originally talking about money. Take a look at the parallel structure, **Luke 6:37b-38a "Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you."** 'Forgive,' and, 'give,' are in parallel. But what do you, 'give,' when you, 'forgive?' Mercy and grace, I think Jesus was originally talking about mercy and grace here. Are you generous in giving mercy and grace to others? Are you generous in offering forgiveness to those who have offended you? I think that is what Jesus really wants us to think about here.



In context, we know that Jesus was speaking primarily to His disciples, especially to the twelve whom He had chosen as apostles. But a crowd is also present, and some of Jesus' words may be directed at people in the crowd. But toward the end of His message, I think that Jesus is once again focused on His disciples. And Jesus has some tough words for them.

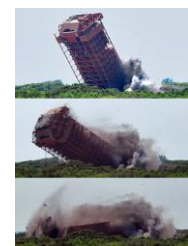
Luke 6:46, "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" The disciples, even those called to be apostles, had this problem then, and we have the same problem now. We say, "Lord Jesus," but often we do not do what He says. I think that, many of us are more careful to obey our boss at work than we are about obeying our Lord. We need to repent and obey Jesus. His teachings about love, forgiveness, and giving are not easy, but they are good and right. And those who learn obedience are blessed.



Jesus Himself is our Lord and He is the Great Teacher who is worthy of obedience. **Luke 6:47-48, "I will show you what he is like who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice. He is like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built."** Those who put Jesus' teachings into practice have an unshakeable peace and joy in their lives. Reading the Bible and hearing Jesus' words is a good start, but obedience to Christ is the firm foundation that cannot be shaken. In this life, all of us will experience trouble. There will be storms and floods because we live in a fallen world that is corrupted by sin. But if we put the words of Jesus into practice in our lives, we can have peace, joy, and hope in any situation.

IV. Conclusion

How do you feel about your own life? Do you feel like something is not quite right? Is your life a bit like this leaning tower in Pisa, Italy? Maybe you have been building your life on a weak foundation. Maybe you need a new foundation for your life. Maybe someone even feels like it is too late; as if your life has already collapsed. But it is not too late. If you feel like your life has fallen apart, then you were probably trying to build without first laying a solid foundation. But I have Good News for you. Your life can be rebuilt. Jesus will help you to begin again, with a new and unshakeable foundation.



Jesus is the Lord of love. He has proven His great love for us on the cross. He offers forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who trust in Him. He gives peace of heart and deep joy to those who obey His word. Let's build our lives on the unshakeable foundation of obedience to Christ Jesus. If we build on the solid rock of Christ, we will have an unshakeable foundation, and meaning and purpose in our lives as we share the Good News of salvation. Let's pray.



V. Closing Prayer