

Parables of Jesus #4

Foundation

Luke 6:37-49

10.09.2016

BIG Idea: Examine your fruit and you will find your foundation.

INTRODUCTION

- In 1999 I became pastor of a church in the Louisville area. Teresa and I wanted to put down our roots in the community so we began looking for a home to buy. That seems impressive but realize you can't buy a parking spot for your car in Boston for what we paid for our entire home on an acre of land in KY. As we were looking for a home, our real estate agent showed us a beautiful home with a great yard. It looked nice and the exterior was in pretty good condition. Went through the house... nice space and good size. Then the real estate agent told me, "you don't want this house." I asked "why?" He was a big man 6'6" maybe 250 and as we were standing in the living room, he jumped up. When he came down I felt the entire house shake. We both smiled knowing that there was a real problem with the foundation. It couldn't be seen with the naked eye but there were serious problems with the foundation and the way it had been built. A house with bad foundation is an expensive and potentially even dangerous thing to live in.
- In the passage for today, we see Jesus digging at our life's foundation. What is it that our whole life is sitting on? The BIG IDEA is examine your fruit and you will find your foundation.
- You may have noticed that today's passage is a series of parables and even some parables within a parable... like a dream within a dream. ☺
- So as we get going, what is at the center of your life? I'm not talking about the lovely siding you have on your house or the beautifully decorated interior. I'm talking about what you are building your life on. Jesus systematically unpacks our attitudes and the fruit of our lives to set up a call to look at what is under our foundation. What is holding up the foundation of our life?

How do I see what's at the center of my life? Jesus tells us to look at 3 things...

1. The measuring stick you use for others (vv.37-42) (you are/aren't like Jesus...)

- Really getting at the internal attitude of your heart toward others...
- vv.37-38 *"Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you."*
- Now, v.37 is one of the most well-known passages in our culture. We are told "judge not" but rarely is the context of these verses taken into context. Jesus is NOT saying "you never have any right to ever say anything to anyone else about what they are doing." That's how it is interpreted out of context.
- In context these verses help us to see that Jesus is not condemning judging but judgmentalism. He is calling for a humble, grace-filled attitude in his followers. He says just a few verses later that you should take the log out of your own eye before helping someone else with their splinter.
- What he is getting at here is how quick we are to judge other people? How quick are we to condemn someone? Maybe not out loud but in our hearts? Do we judge others constantly? How quick are we to give others the benefit of the doubt? How ready are we to forgive when others wrong us? How easy do you find it to give to others?
- Jesus is digging at our hearts here. He is saying the internal measuring stick you use for others is

the gauge of your heart and will be what you receive back. Then he gives us a short metaphor to help us understand what it means when he is at the center: give and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. IMAGE – Using a common scene from Jesus world, someone would buy a commodity like grain and its not a short supply but a “good” measure. The grain in the measuring container is pressed down, so that all the spaces are filled and the container holds as much as possible. The measuring container is shaken, so that the grain can fill every empty space. The container is filled over the top so there is a rounded heap on top of the container and then more comes and it starts to spill over into the fold of the outer garment that people wear in that time.

- For those full of pride and judgmentalism you will be judged but for the one full of humility who extends grace, forgiveness, and mercy toward others, their container will be overflowed by God.
- Jesus is saying that a heart full of pride judges others but a Heart of humility that receives grace extends grace to others. Forgiven people forgive people. The generosity in us is a response to God’s generosity to us.
- But if we judge others, condemn others, and don’t forgive others, our hearts are full of pride like many of the religious leaders of Jesus’ time.
- v.38-40 *He also told them a parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.*
- Blind guides – this is an example of Jesus using a humorous but sad image. A blind guide leading a blind man doesn’t work out well for either.
- ILL – years ago I heard of a man who had a bunch of OUIs who was too drunk to drive home one night so he gave his keys to a sober friend of his to drive. One problem, his friend was blind. The guy knew it but had decided that he could give directions to his blind friend on how to drive them both home.
- Jesus is saying if you are following the path of the prideful they are going to lead you down a blind path. He tells his disciples, “a disciple is not above his teacher...” meaning, “Hey, look at me. I have come extending grace. If you are following me, you will learn to do the same.”
- vv.41-42 *Why do you see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother’s eye.*
- This is one of the sarcastic sayings of Jesus. He’s pointing out how quickly we can jump on other people’s sins but be so slow to see and admit our own. He’s using extreme language here. So picture this... on the one hand, your friend has sinned. You see it. It is so obvious to you because you walk around with a magnifying glass in your heart. As you look at their sin, it is a big deal to you but in fact it is just a tiny speck. **IMAGINE HOW SILLY THIS IS... 2X4**
- Jesus calls people who does this “hypocrites” it’s easy to think, “Well, Jesus is just saying, ‘You fool’ or ‘You idiot’ ” but no. The word *hypocrisy*, for Jesus, is a very specific word. The English word is the word *hypocrite* in Greek. *Hypocrite* is the Greek word itself, just brought right into English. Almost letter for letter. However, the Greek word *hypocrite* is the same word as the Greek word for an actor.

Right away, some of you say, “YES! I thought so. All actors are hypocrites.” No. That’s not what it’s saying. What he *is* saying, however, is all hypocrisy is acting. Back in those days, what you

would do if you were an actor was you used a literal mask to be able to play the part you were given. The mask hid who you really were underneath.

- He is not merely point to the inconsistency between words and deeds; at a deeper level, it is the discrepancy between a person's inner nature and his or her outward appearances. (Liefeld, W. L., & Pao, D. W. *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Luke-Acts. Revised Edition*; Vol. 10, p. 140).
- So Jesus is saying the measuring stick we use for those around us is an indicator of what is at the center of our lives. If we are full of pride then we are quick to judge and condemn, slow to forgive, and slow to give to others. We love noticing other people's splinters in their eyes while we overlook the lumberyard in our own.
- Jesus then tells us the next key to getting at what is at the center of your life...

2. The treasury that feeds your fruit (vv.43-45)

- This parable focuses not simply on the attitudes of our hearts but how that attitude produces fruit in our lives.
- vv.43-44 *"For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush."*
- Again Jesus uses humor here in his imagery. Figgy thornbushes and grape-bramble bushes. Can you imagine going on a walk and coming up to a thornbush with figs on it? Would you think, "Wow, a fig-bearing thornbush?" or would you start looking for the staples or glue and start looking around for hidden cameras?
- We ALL know that thornbushes don't bear figs. That's the point. Our lives bear fruit. The truth is we bear fruit 24 a day/7 days a week. The fruit of our lives is what comes out and impacts those around us. Building off the previous verses, does your pride lead you to use other people? To lash out in anger? To act out in ways that are greedy? To be selfish with your time? Your energy? Your talents? If your heart is focused on you, you will produce what Paul calls the deeds of the flesh in...
- Galatians 5:19-21a *"sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these."*
- These are set contrast what Paul calls the "Fruit of the Spirit" in Galatians 5:22-23 *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."*
- So in other words, I can try to focus on a few good things I do, but if my life is producing bad fruit, then it points to the deeper reality about what bad thing is at the center of my life. The bible would say that ANYTHING other than God at the center of your life is bad and will produce bad fruit.
- The Spirit in Gal 5 is the Holy Spirit, the 3rd member of the Trinity, and when he is at the center of our lives it produces beautiful fruit that not only glorifies God but blesses others. Who doesn't want a friend who is growing in the fruit of the Spirit?
- v.45 *The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."*
- Jesus gives a categorical statement here: you are either good or evil. There are many ways to be an evil person – but it basically boils down to building our life around you and what you want, whatever that looks like. And having that at the center of your life will produce bad fruit.

- Having God at the center will produce good fruit. In particular, Jesus focuses on words as a reflection of the heart. Similar to another text in Matthew...
- Matthew 15:18-19 *But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.*
- Now, what is Jesus saying if I know I have bad fruit and what is at the center of my life is NOT him. We will get to that more fully in the final point, but what we need is not to change the bad fruit in our lives... but to experience a heart transplant. God's message to you is not, "OK, tomorrow I want you to do out and bear some good fruit." He is saying, you have to replace what is at the center of your life.
- One of the big indicators that we need to make that change is the treasury that feeds our fruit. We have to examine the fruit to get at the foundation and that is our final key to getting at what is at the center of your life...

3. The foundation you are building life on (vv.46-49) (the storm settles it)

- All the parables Jesus has shared in our passage today are digging at one simple idea: you are building your life on something. There is a foundation under all of the stuff we call life. It is what we are building life on.
- v.46 *"Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you?"*
- Some of Jesus' followers were claiming that they were following Jesus but they weren't. They called him "Lord, Lord" but they didn't obey his commands. They had bought into some of what Jesus had said and they liked the idea of following him but in reality the center of their lives was still themselves.
- He is pointing to when the confession of your mouth doesn't align with the foundation of your heart.
- Then he tells this parable... vv.47-49 *"Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he 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. But 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."*
- Jerusalem was built on rock... people KNEW what he was talking about.
- ILL – Most Israel/Palestine villagers only build during the summer. The rain comes in the winter and Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Hebron sit on a ridge where water will run off into the valley below. The pull of building a home quickly under the summer heat can cause a person to build on hardened clay. In the intense sun they don't want to take the time to dig down through the clay to get to the bedrock so they throw up their home and everything goes great until the winter rains come. The clay ground around the home begins to turn to the consistency of chocolate pudding and then the clay under the walls of the home begin to get soaked and soften. The stone walls begin to settle and the field stones used to make the walls begin to pop out making the entire structure unstable and unsafe. So, in the middle of a storm the man who built his home quickly is now quickly abandoning his home as it collapses around him.
- An actual case of this happened in an apartment complex in a Jerusalem suburb. On Aug 28, 1991 a third of the complex collapsed due to a sewer line leakage under that part of the building. It turned out that the section had been built on loose soil instead of bedrock. A local report said "The destruction is massive and resembles that of a major earthquake." (*Jesus through Eastern Eyes*)
- This is the reality of the person who doesn't make Christ their foundation but Jesus is not simply

saying this to tell what will happen but to get you and I to think hard about our foundation. Is it built on the solid rock of Jesus or success, money, or power? What are you building on?

- ILL - Jim Carrey: "I think everybody should get rich and famous and do everything they ever dreamed of so they can see that it's not the answer" (false foundations example)
- What if you get everything you hold dear at this moment? Where does it lead? For example, if success at work is your foundation, what happens when you reach all the success that we ever will? Your work is not going to name a building after you when you retire. They aren't going to mourn for months or years after you are gone. They will throw a party for you and hire someone else to do your job.
- We all need a foundation that will endure. We all have a lord at the center of our lives. We live for him, we worship him, we use our time and resources to please him. That lord might be you and when all is said and done you will find your life collapsing around you. The way you measure others and your internal attitudes toward them and the fruit that you are bearing in your life show that you are the center.

CONCLUSION

- GOSPEL – the good news of the gospel is that we are all born into this world with a broken foundation. We build our lives on our looks, on our abilities, on our success, on the money we have, on the education we attain and yet, when all of that is finished, we are left with a broken foundation that will not stand the storm of God's wrath.
- We need a new foundation by getting a new lord. We have to step down off the throne of our own lives and humble ourselves before God. We cry out to him that we are broken in our sin and rebellion and foolishness and need his grace to come in forgive and cleanse us. We cry out to God and he comes and we find a new foundation established on the rock of Jesus Christ. He is really our Lord and our life is eternally secure on him.
- ILL -House in Newport Rhode Island –built on the water in 1895. It has endured and survived several hurricanes and countless nor-easters that washed other houses into the water. What is amazing about this house surviving is not that it is simply on the water but it is completely surrounded by water. Yes, one home completely surrounded by water on a bay in Rhode Island survived 121 years of storms while hundreds of homes across New England have slipped into the ocean. What's the secret of this amazing old home? I'll let you tell me. PICTURE. The home is aptly named "Clingstone"
<http://www.nytimes.com/2008/08/07/garden/07clingstone.html>
- Jesus is that rock that all of us need to build our foundation on. If you have never done that, today we want to help you on that journey. Connection Card. Pray in the back...
- Jesus said the wise man literally "dug down deep" to lay the foundation on the rock. As a Christian you need to remember your foundation and communion is that reminder. His life, death, and resurrection tell us once and for all we are loved and forgiven. His presence and power in our lives tells us he will never leave us nor forsake us. His Spirit in us promises to bear the fruit we long for in our lives.

COMMUNION

PEOPLE IN BACK TO PRAY WITH YOU

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