

The Parable of The House on The Rock

Rev. Dr. Kim Engelmann

West Valley Presbyterian Church

Today on this 4th of July weekend – the 5th of July we are talking about the parable of the man who built his house upon the rock.

I want to draw your attention to the quote from Benjamin Franklin that's on the insert in your bulletin.

Given the weekend I thought it would be appropriate to stick in some quotes from the perspective of the founders of this nation.

These men many of them steeped in faith had the knowledge that God was at work to create a place where people could indeed be free, to worship as they pleased – to live in liberty.

One quote is especially relevant this morning though and I'd like us to read it together. It is from Benjamin Franklin who wasn't considered the most devout but he said this...

We've been assured in the sacred writings that unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it. I firmly believe that without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel.

BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

Unless the Lord build the house

Jesus talked a lot about houses, dwelling places, rooms to stay in, hosts and domiciles and coming home

I think this is because he knew that this world was not our home

That as people we were tossed about in this life with all kinds of changes and storms and difficulties

And that in the end, in this life, the only true place of refuge is building our house on a firm foundation

Who is Jesus Christ himself...

I want you to know this...that

Jesus never talked to people in a complicated way that seemed irrelevant, or that they couldn't understand.

Jesus talked to the people who followed him, in stories that they *loved* to listen to... called parables....he was a great story teller.

He always would tell stories that were relevant to their life circumstances That were all about real life...they weren't abstractions/or irrelevancies....

Jesus would use imagery that folks could relate to...

We talked about that last week with the mustard seeds.

There's a lot about seeds, and harvesting; about vineyards, and fruit, in the parables because Jesus was talking to an agrarian community....and took the things people were familiar with...and then related these very common things to the kingdom of God....

Probably today if Jesus walked the earth he'd be using parables having to do with memory chips, and Google, and self-driving cars, and apps, and genetic technology.

Back then in addition to being farmers, many of the people also were into construction – carpentry and masonry.

And we know that Jesus himself was either a carpenter or a mason – we aren't sure which one because the word carpenter and mason are interchangeable in the original text.

So in telling this story Jesus is using the people's language and making a spiritual point, using their life context – using things they knew and were familiar with.

So he tells the story on how you build a house...every mason and carpenter perked up their ears...yes Jesus...tell us how to build a house that is strong and stable and will weather the storms...

Today, any real estate agent will tell you that when you buy a house there are three things that determine the value of a house...and those three things are 1)location! 2) Location! 3) location!

Two houses may look very similar...
They might both have a chimney, and a sliding glass door...
With three bedrooms, a livingroom, and an eat-in kitchen

But even though two houses look very similar
The price may be very different between the two of them
Why?
Because there is something fundamentally different about them
And it had to do with Location!

We know this - we live in an area that is a very highly sought out area in which to live.
The prices are exorbitant and drive people away. The bidding wars are out of reach for most of us.
1.4 million for a tiny house – and that's before the bidding wars get started.

**If the same house were built in a different location, the value would go way down.
And that is Jesus' point in this parable!**

The house for Jesus symbolized a human life...
The first one, built by the foolish builder, was built in the sand, down by the beach...
The sand was lower down...easier to get to...and a lot of people were building houses there....
There were lots of locations in the sand where you could build...

You could build in the sand in **Pleasure Acres**...where fun and frolic was the name of the game...and there's nothing wrong with fun...but letting fun be the foundation of your life is rather foolish.

Or you could build in the sand in **Greenback Paradise**...where acquiring money and more stuff is really the focus of life...and in a lot of places in scripture Jesus says that's foolish too

Another option was to build in the sand in **Competition Court**...where being better than the person next to you is the point...Jesus says that leads to burn out and despair

Finally...in the sandy loam you can build in the **Goodworks cul de sac**...which goes nowhere...if you don't have a Savior...

Jesus is saying in this passage "If you build down by the beach...on the sand...**Wrong location! Decreased value to life!**"

Because Location! Location! Location! Is what its all about...

And he says "The place to build for value and fortitude is up here on the rock...Yeah...its a little more difficult to get to, and it may take a little more work in terms of drilling down and making it work...but if you build your house here....
Your life is going to be built on a firm foundation

So that when the storms come in this life ...and they will come....believe you me...
Because life is like that, we all know that
When the storms come....and they beat upon you
You will stand secure, and you won't fall over, like the houses that are being built in the sand

It wont be money, or pleasure, or competition or good works that keep you from collapsing when things get tough...cause all of those things are all about you...
If you rely on those things..your house isn't going to stand...cause you're not going to stand

Rather God says...its going to be me... holding you up...your Lord and your God...your Creator and Savior
Not you...if you let me build your house, if you let me be your rock solid foundation
When the storm is over, you'll still be standing, cause I'll be holding you up

After the rains come...
And after the thunder booms and the lightening flashes
When the swirling wind dies down you'll look around and see that you still dwell securely
Cause I the Lord NEVER CHANGE

God says to you today: I am the solid rock...and I am faithful and I don't change or shift with circumstances; I am stronger than any storm...and faithful to the end...build your life on me...

Our family likes to go to the beach....lots of sand there....
And we live up in San Mateo so we usually go to the beaches out at HMB

Each time we go, I notice that the contour of the beach is always a little bit different, depending on the tides, and the way the wind blows, and whether there has been a storm there recently....

The other day we went over there, and there was hardly any beach at all....
Sand shifts...it changes...
And in the same way, people change, and culture changes, and geography changes,
and even your body changes....like the shifting sand

Maybe you've seen the bumper sticker that says "**Change is inevitable, except from a vending machine.**"

But its true...change is constant and inevitable

People change

people can go up and down...moody

The most frequent question employees ask the administrative assistant about their CEO is...."Is the boss in a good mood today?"

Cause it makes a huge difference in the quality of the day for the employee....and people's moods fluctuate...you just never know...

Geography changes. How many of you remember a place called the *Soviet Union* that use to get talked about a lot...doesn't exist anymore. New countries come and go.

Technology changes.

In the time it took infants to become adolescents we all got cell phones

The top 10 in-demand jobs that will be around in 2016 did not exist in 2008,

There was a day when

people looked for steady jobs...where they'd stay in the same place for 50 years... No more. The U.S.

Department of Labor estimates the average student will have 10 to 14 jobs... by the time they're 38 years old.

Culture changes In 1969, a politician in Great Britain predicted, "It will be years...not in my

time...before a woman will become Prime Minister." The politician who said that was named Margaret

Thatcher, who of course became the first woman Prime Minister.

The universe changes. When I

grew up, the solar system had nine planets. Do you all know what happened to Pluto? It got disqualified. It doesn't even get to be a planet anymore.

Your body changes. Have you noticed that...some of you? The number of hairs on your

head...if you still have some....and are over the age of 40...is probably declining while the number of wrinkles in your face is on an upswing...

I was at the hairdressers the other day and there are magazines in that place that I don't usually read....but I was bored

So I very tentatively picked up the magazine "Self" – I'd never even touched that thing. Looks like a magazine I'd rather do without. But I was bored so I dared to pick it up - and I was absolutely shocked as I flipped through it!

Did you know people are making billions of dollars telling you that you can control and reverse the change that's happening to your body as you age.

You can Botox it, Rogaine it, liposuct it, aerobicize it, moisturize it, pasteurize it, turn your whole physique into a mud slide.....all to prevent change

But the change happens nonetheless... we try to stop it, slow it down, but it is inevitable.

Now with all this change, how do we cope?
Where do we go for security, for a solid sense of how to live our lives?
For those of you with children...or grandchildren
What are you teaching them that will last them a lifetime, that will never change, and that will go on after this life is over into eternity

That will guide them and direct them to make wise choices no matter how much the culture like shifting sand changes, or the human body changes, or the circumstances in their lives go up and down?
Where are they supposed to go when everything is in flux all the time?
Sometimes we might wonder is there nothing that is rock solid? That will stay the same?
That they can rely on?

The truth is that...**"The only way to navigate a changing world, is to hold onto an unchanging God....."**
God never changes!
Scripture tells us that...

"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever."

"Every good and perfect gift comes from God with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning."

I just want to remind you...in case you forgot...and sometimes I do and I have to remind myself...

That God isn't a human being
God is God...glorious and full of truth..rock solid in
his love and grace for you...that never ever changes
It doesn't even vary one degree, or half a degree
You can build your life...on the foundation of that rock solid grace...

God never has a bad day. God never wakes up on the wrong side of the bed.
When you pray, you never need to worry about catching God in a bad mood.
WOW.
Our God never changes.
And saying God never changes
doesn't mean He is distant or frozen or unmovable.
What it does means is that His character is absolutely consistent,

Jesus is here today with us in spirit, and is the exact same Jesus who walked the earth 2,000plus years ago...

And who was Jesus then?

This table represents his nature then today...

Look at this table...this table shouts out to you today

On this weekend where we celebrate liberty of a nation

This table shouts out

Come to me...and experience personal liberty from all your burdens

Come to me and experience liberty from all your failures

Come to me and know that you are forgiven

Come to me and I will give you rest

And Jesus is the one that built this house called Christianity

This house that rests on his eternal unchanging grace

This house where God says "***I am your righteousness for you. You can't build the house. Let me do it for you. Let me be your righteousness, your salvation, your foundation.***"

So God gives his life, so we can live, and experience true liberty from our sin

And God has never changed from the God who gave up everything to go to the cross for us

Who today never ceases to forgive a repentant heart

A God who never ceases to love unconditionally

A God who always hates the shifting sand of carnal sin because it destroys us, and calls us instead to our life on the solid rock truth of his Amazing Unchangeable Grace

His words to us in scripture are these: "**My grace is sufficient for you for my power is made perfect in your weakness.**"

You can stake your life on that rock solid grace

You can build your house on it

It will weather the storms

It will stand up to the winds

It will be there when all else has fallen

Because God never changes...this is such good news, because **God is so good!**

So much better than Greenback Paradise, Competition Court, or the Goodworks Cul de Sac!

That's because God's love for me is the same yesterday, today and forever

That no matter how badly I mess up, when I come to him and repent, God's grace is sufficient

His power is made perfect in my weakness

And that rock solid truth will get me through the worst of storms

Location...Location...Location

Build your house on God's Amazing Grace

Build your house on the Rock

Let us pray together