

The House On The Rock
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In honor of this day, I want to share with you a picture of Pastor Young Rhyon's new grandchild - his middle name is Evan...which means rock! I



know he was born just for this message today...be sure to congratulate Pastor Kim When you see him.

(picture from Young Rhyon)

You may have noticed that Jesus has a lot to say about rocks in scripture.

In fact new evidence suggests that Jesus was not necessarily a carpenter, but he was more likely a stone-mason.

(picture of rock)

The words for mason and carpenter are the same in the Greek, and Jesus' constant reference to rocks and stones and cornerstones make it very likely that he worked with them to make a living.

So this story is about building your house on a rock...a firm foundation...



How many of you know the song...The Wise Man built his house upon the rock.

Can we sing that together, just for fun? If you don't know this song, count yourself young and "with it".

This is not a contemporary "with it" song – its a kids song...with hand motions...But I love it...

Let's sing one verse together....

The wise man built his house upon the rock (3X)

And the rains came tumbling down

The rains came down, and the floods came up (3X)

And the house on the rock stood firm!

The second verse is about the foolish man who built his house upon the sand...and how the house on the sand went SPLAT!!

Finally, the last verse says...So build your house on the Lord Jesus Christ...and your house will always stand firm.

So I can sit down now....I don't need to preach...you get the point...

Some of you know that I am a New Yorker.

I went to college there, met my husband there, have my favorite restaurants there, and I am told I still have an East Coast accent.

I have tried so hard to be a native CA for the past 20 years, but saying "yeah" a lot, and a certain way I pronounce my "r's" and certain other things always gives me away...

But being a New Yorker, I love the skyline of New York City with its tall majestic buildings but what fascinates me even more is the city beneath the city. (skyline picture)

There are 9,000 manhole covers in the city and they service 92,000 miles of utilities, (picture)

There are 722 miles of subway tracks beneath the city built about a hundred years ago. (picture)

If they were laid end to end, they would stretch from New York to Chicago.

When the subway first opened, it was quite the fascination for New Yorkers.

In fact, subway explorers would actually go under ground and walk down the tracks and the trains were slow moving back then so that people could jump out of the way when the trains came.

They were called dodgers, which is where the Brooklyn Dodgers got their name.

So there is this magnificent skyline of New York City up above and then there is the city beneath the city that holds everything up.

The city that is beneath the city, is the key because that's where the rock is. It has a name.

It is called **The Manhattan Schist**. It is the rock that everything in that enormous city is built on.

It is pretty critical.

In some places, the bedrock is pretty close to street level. Rockefeller Center got lucky because the Manhattan schist is pretty close to the surface, but the Woolworth building, which was the tallest building in the world until 1930, they had to dig down 120 feet to hit bedrock and once they did, they had to sink 69 concrete pillars into the ground.

And as you look at the skyline, where the skyscrapers are clustered, that is where the Manhataan schist is closest to the surface (picture)

In other words...

The above ground city is really just a mirror of what is under the surface.

You can't build anything for sure that is structurally sound in Manhattan unless you're on the Manhattan schist

A rock solid foundation.

And for anyone, no matter what you are building anywhere, you have to find bedrock.

The subterranean topography is the key to what happens above the surface of the ground and I think that it true of our lives even more than it is true of a physical building.

I saw some pretty cheap real estate the other day in a very affluent community. And out of curiosity I asked the person I was with, "Why is this plot of land so inexpensive."

And the person who knew the area well said, "its because it's a swamp. You can't build anything on it. It will sink."

So the question for us is – what is bedrock for us as Christians?

What is under the surface for us, on which we are building our lives?

What sustains us?

Where do we find strength, meaning and purpose?

What is our rock?

What are we built on?

We have a statement of core beliefs in ECO...essential tenets and your elders and deacons just affirmed those beliefs this morning as we installed and ordained them.

When we went to the National Gathering there was a lot of discussion about our confessions and which ones were the most important.

We wanted to be sure in making the confessions more lean and understandable that we didn't lose the bedrock of our theological heritage.

But If you go way back to the beginning, the early church's bedrock was a creed that was so simple...it was just three words: **Jesus is Lord.**

That was it. That was the bedrock for how Christianity got started...how the church began.

Romans 10:9-10 fleshes it out a little more and says

⁹ If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved.

The entire Christian movement began with the simple bedrock - Jesus is Lord – and it has stood the test of time as countless churches, nonprofits, seminaries and schools, missions and human lives have been built on this truth, and it has held up for centuries.

Jesus is Lord. That is the bedrock.

Now,. let’s move from NY across the continent to CA. We build things out here that are “earthquake safe”. It doesn’t mean that the building is not going to shake a little in an earthquake, but its not going to collapse.

So, sometimes we go through earthquakes in our own lives where things get shaken up a bit...and even though we are in an earthquake safe place in terms of our faith not collapsing we need a little encouragement.

So I have some promises I go to when things are little shaky in my life...to remind me of the bedrock on which my faith is built...Promises like...

*In their hearts humans plan their course,
but the Lord establishes their steps.*

Sometimes when I feel a little lost, I just need to remind myself that God is ordering my footsteps.

Philippians 1:6

⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

I believe that.

Ephesians 2:10

¹⁰ For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Ephesians 3:20

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us,

Those are bedrock promises for me, when an earthquake happens.

What are your bedrock promises? What encourages you?

If you have not surrendered your life to Jesus Christ, know that is where it all starts.

Praying, "Come into my heart Lord Jesus..."

That is where the spiritual journey begins. That's how you build your life on the rock.

The Message paraphrases this parable in verse 24 this way

²⁴⁻²⁵ "These words I speak to you are not incidental additions to your life. They are foundational words, words to build a life on.

Verse 24 says

*²⁴ "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine **and puts them into practice** is like a wise man who built his house on the rock*

And puts them into practice...hmmmm

In other words, don't show me your transcript, I don't want to know what you know. Show me your resume.

Don't be hearers of the Word only but doers of it.

My greatest fear as a pastor is that people just listen to a sermon – go out and say...well that was a dumb message...or that was a great message... and leave it there...and not do anything with it.

My favorite Kierkegaard parable (Kierkegaard was a Danish theologian) is the one about the Duck Pastor.

The Duck Pastor had a small duck church in small duck village. Every Sunday the ducks would waddle to church. The Duck pastor would preach. And one day the Duck pastor got up and said, "I have made an amazing discovery. We have wings. We can fly!" After the sermon was over the ducks came out and said, "Great message pastor.

And they waddled home!...They could have flown."

Jesus is not going to say, 'Well listened good and faithful servant.'

No! He's going to say...**Well done good and faithful servant.**

That's why I appreciate those who stepped forward to say YES when nominating asked if they would serve as a deacon or elder.

That is why I am so happy for the team going to Santa Marta. It's in the doing that we actualize our faith...not in the listening...not in the hearing.

The listening and hearing are important because they remind us of what we are meant to do and be, but what we hear is meant to be acted upon.

As a colleague of mine often says..."**Love needs to look like something.**"

If we think about the Manhattan schist, when geographers found out about it...the architects didn't just say to themselves...

Oh that's nice to know....yawn...

Rather they said really?

Think of all the great things we can build on that rock!

They dreamt big dreams...and built the most elaborate and beautiful city.

Because they knew that rock...the Manhattan Schist... would hold up the biggest buildings they could imagine

They had not doubt.

So for us...

If Jesus Christ is our foundation, friends we can do anything.

The sky is the limit

We have a solid rock, a secure base

So that when we go out and “do” the gospel

When we go out and risk for the Lord

When we go out in faith, we can have confidence that the rock – who is Jesus Christ himself will hold us up and will keep us secure.

Thomas Shepherd actually helped to found Harvard College in 1636.

And He had a little catch phrase which was **‘make a new prayer experiment’**

He said why do people experiment in the sciences but they don’t experiment with doing the gospel ?

So my challenge to you today is....make an experiment of DOING the gospel.

To increase your confidence in his being your solid rock

Maybe you take one of the parables we’ve been going through, and you put it into practice...

You do a mustard seed experiment...do something small for someone else...and see if it grows into anything

You do a forgiveness experiment – like with the prodigal son – and practice forgiveness for a week and see how you feel after that.

Maybe you do a tithing experiment for a few months...give ten percent of your money to God...and then notice if God blesses you or not

Or maybe try praying for those who persecute you – people you don’t like – for a month, and see what happens.

With Jesus Christ as your firm foundation, you can't lose.

Let's say these words together...²⁴ **“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock**

AMEN

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