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*<sup>41</sup> 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? <sup>42</sup> 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.* Luke 6:41,42 The theme of the Sermon on the Plain returns to Jesus' warning not to be judgmental (6:37<sup>i</sup>). We see a minor fault in someone, but we miss the fact that we have a much greater fault. We can see faults in others much easier than we can see them in ourselves. Either we have a blind spot and have been insensitive to the Spirit's correction, or we have justified our sin in our minds. Sometimes the faults we see in others are seen because we are aware of similar temptations in our own lives. Even if we don't give in, the temptation is there because our old nature is sinful. We must repent of our own faults first (Galatians 6:1<sup>ii</sup>). When God has humbled us, we can see clearly, so that instead of condemning others, we can encourage them to repent and be free in Christ (John 8:31,32<sup>iii</sup>).

A spirit that is critical and judgmental is rooted in pride. Jesus has instructed His disciples to have a spirit of love and grace. He taught that when we see others' faults, we should consider our own faults. Of course, we can say that blatant sin is wrong, but even then, we should consider how we are tempted to do the same or even do so in our thought life (Matthew 5:28<sup>iv</sup>).

Over the years we've had people with a very critical spirit come and go. They never stay because nothing will ever be good enough. They can see the wrong in everyone and everything but themselves. It is a miserable way to live. The immature believer looks up to them because they are quick to confront anything that is not what they deem to be according to their pure doctrine. They seem knowledgeable, bold, and extra holy for they judge the littlest things. **Knowledge without humility becomes conceit.**

After dealing with the human tendency to be critical, Jesus tells us how to rightly judge a person's spiritual state. Jesus calls the product of our lives fruit. <sup>43</sup> *"For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, <sup>44</sup> for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush.* Luke 6:43,44 A good tree/believer will produce goodness for God is good (Psalm 119:168<sup>v</sup>). Satan is the accuser of the brothers (Revelation 12:10<sup>vi</sup>), but God bestows grace and mercy (Hebrews 4:16<sup>vii</sup>). Good fruit is the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22,23<sup>viii</sup>). But the critical spirit has no patience and does not sow peace but rather division. To them, patience is compromise, love is to condemn, and self-control is to walk away from fellowship and relationships that don't measure up to their standard. They presume the worst when interpreting words or actions of others. They presume to know others motives and most often see them in a negative light. And when they declare others have selfish motives, how can the accused defend themselves? That kind of attitude is bad fruit, not good fruit. It is more like the accuser.

Good fruit is bearing with those who have differences and sharing the truth in loving patience (1 Corinthians 13:7<sup>ix</sup>). It is kindly putting up with things that are not as they think they should be; that is of course everything but heresy. It is humility, recognizing the faults you see in others are probably noticeable because they are or have been your own (Romans 2:1-3<sup>x</sup>, 21-24<sup>xi</sup>). It is to look for Jesus in your brothers and sisters rather than to focus on their faults. It is loving and gracious and seeks the other's good, considering them more significant than yourself (Philippians 2:3<sup>xii</sup>).

<sup>45</sup> *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.* Luke 6:45 The mouth is a spring that will pour forth bitter water or fresh. The fruits of the Spirit will come from a good heart. The fruits of the flesh from the evil heart. Listen to your own words. Are they edifying? Do they build up the body? Do they express grace? And most of all, do they glorify God? If you want to know the condition of your heart, listen to the words that come from your mouth (James 1:26<sup>xiii</sup>). James tells us, <sup>10</sup> *From the same mouth come blessing and cursing. My brothers, these things ought not to be so.* <sup>11</sup> *Does a spring pour forth from the same opening both fresh and salt water?* <sup>12</sup> *Can a fig tree, my brothers, bear olives, or a grapevine produce figs? Neither can a salt pond yield fresh water.* James 3:10-12 It is the words that pour from our hearts that will acquit or condemn us on the day of judgment, for they reveal what is in our hearts (Matthew 12:33-37<sup>xiv</sup>). Followers of Jesus should judge properly, not by appearances, but by the fruit of a person's life. At the same time, they are not judgmental. (consider including Romans 14:1-4<sup>xv</sup>).

When we observe blatant sin in our brother or sister's life, the Bible tells us how to go about helping them. We should go to them privately (Matthew 18:15<sup>xvi</sup>), gently and humbly while considering our own weaknesses (Galatians 6:1,2<sup>xvii</sup>), and be aiming for restoration (2 Corinthians 13:11<sup>xviii</sup>). Any brother or sister can help another in this loving, gracious manner.

Elders must watch over the entire congregation and must make doctrinal and moral judgments about what is taught to keep the church from error while building it up in love (Ephesians 4:15,16<sup>xix</sup>; Acts 20:28-30<sup>xx</sup>). But we must never entertain a critical spirit that condemns everyone who doesn't agree with us on non-essential doctrines and avoid presuming to know one's motives. We can discern the heart condition by the fruit that comes from the lips and the life a person lives.

<sup>46</sup> *“Why do you call me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do what I tell you?”* Luke 6:46 To call someone Lord, and yet refuse to do what they tell you reveals that calling them Lord was deceptive. **“No Lord!”, is an oxymoron. “Yes, Lord!” is redundant.** The double use of Lord in the verse implies and emphatic declaration. There must have been those among Jesus' followers who called him Lord but were not acting in love toward others. It is very common in our day because of our post-Christian culture (Matthew 24:12<sup>xxi</sup>). Many who call Jesus their Lord don't hesitate to be unforgiving, unloving, judgmental, and seek the approval of men more than that which comes from God (Galatians 1:10<sup>xxii</sup>). The parable that follows illustrates the danger in hearing Jesus but not acting on what He is teaching.

*<sup>47</sup> Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: <sup>48</sup> 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.* Luke 6:47,48 First Jesus addressed those who come to Him and hear His words and obeys them. Those are the three prerequisites to the promise that followed: come, hear and obey. These are a contrast to those who call Jesus Lord, Lord, but don't do what He says. These who have a sure foundation **come** to Jesus first. Mankind usually goes to self first, then a trusted friend, and then some self-help book or TV personality. The promise in these verses is for those who come to *Him*. We come to Him in our devotional times, our prayer times, and our times of worship with other believers. You've come to hear from Jesus in His Word this morning. True disciples begin this journey by coming to Jesus with ears ready and eager to hear.

Then we must **hear** His words. He speaks to us through Scripture. The gospels declare Jesus' words. The letters explain them. The Holy Spirit applies them to our lives. If we don't take the time to hear, we negate the promise.

The national daily recitation of Israel is, "Hear O Israel!" This kind of hearing is not just letting the words strike our ears but letting them into our hearts. There needs to be a serious effort to come to hear and obey what we believe God is speaking to us.

An interesting effect of the Great Awakening was that a great number of people wanted to take notes during sermons. They would bring a quill, ink well, and paper to the services and try to take down as much as they could. Hearing means there is a spiritual hunger and therefore an effort is made to hear and retain. Instead of spacing out or tuning out during the preaching, they were desperate to catch every word. They wanted to understand what the Holy Spirit was speaking to them so that they could adjust their lives according to what they heard.

Finally, we must **obey** what we hear. Obedience to the revelation of the Word and application by the Holy Spirit are prerequisites to receiving the promise of withstanding the storms of life. When you hear a sermon or read a devotional do you come away with a point of action or a change in the way you think? Do you have a notebook of key lessons you are learning so you can review them to see that you are acting on what you have heard? Come, hear, and obey. One follows the other if our hearts are intent on hearing from God. Then we are truly disciples (John 8:31<sup>xxiii</sup>)!

Jesus is truly their Lord for they do what He tells them. That is not an easy task. Jesus describes it to be like the careful excavation of the foundation of a building. First the builder digs down to solid rock. Today we dig a foot or two down, frame up the foundation and pour a footing of concrete and rebar. That is a lot easier than digging down to solid rock.

Each time I go to Israel I see this huge square hole in front of a hotel where we stay near one of Jerusalem's old city gates. It is excavation for a hotel. The hole goes down fifty feet or more. I don't know what delayed construction for so long, but the depth reminds of this passage. Digging deep to get down to bedrock is a thorough searching of the heart to yield one's entire will to the Master. **If I am going to call Him Lord, I better**

be ready to surrender when my will conflicts with His. I had better settle in my heart now if my life is His or my own (Galatians 2:20<sup>xxiv</sup>). Is there anything I hold so dear that I cannot let go of and put Him first? It's a laborious, sometimes painful task to make that examination (2 Corinthians 13:5<sup>xxv</sup>). But I had better do it, or I will misrepresent Him to others. If the world knows that I call Him Lord, they would expect me to act according to His character. If I don't act accordingly, they will use it as an excuse not to believe.

The storms of life are inevitable. Sometimes they seem unbearable. Illness, the loss of a loved one, betrayal by friends, financial ruin, are but a few of the storms that can overwhelm us like a flood. But Jesus is saying that if you have done the hard work of building the foundation of your life on the rock (and He is the rock) then your house, your life, your spiritual well-being will withstand the storms. <sup>11</sup> *For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.* 1 Corinthians 3:11 Life in Christ does not guarantee that all will be well. It does promise that our house will remain.

We've all seen pictures of houses near the ocean or a river that were undermined and no longer safe to inhabit or were even washed away. That is what happens to a life if we do not do that work of coming to Jesus, hearing Him, and obeying.

<sup>49</sup> *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.*” Luke 6:49 Next is the description of those who call Jesus Lord, but do not do what He says. They have heard and made a declaration that Jesus is their Lord, but they never did the hard work of digging down into their soul and surrendering all to Jesus. Their life was not built on Him but on their own desires.

I've seen it happen. A family wanted their children to have some morality in their lives, so they started attending church here. I took time to make sure they understood the basics of the faith, meeting with them in their home for several months. But when we got to the end of the study and they heard they were supposed to be willing to share Jesus with others, they decided that was not what they were looking for. They began to build, they came and even heard, but they would not surrender all to Jesus and obey.

One day they let me know that they wanted to ride their ATVs with the kids on Sundays. Their excuse for not surrendering to Jesus was family. A few years later the storms came. They divorced. I don't know what happened to the children, but divorce is always hard on children. I've seen it too many times. It always comes down to my way or the way of Jesus.

Some are subtler in their duplicity. They will attend church regularly but the way they live, the fruit of their lives, declares they do not really honor Jesus as Lord. We have many in our town who went to church when they were young and even through middle age, but now that they are retired they don't want to be bothered with fellowship. Church was a means to socialize when they were younger, but He wasn't Lord. He never became the foundation of their lives.

We must each take that time, no matter where we are in life to examine ourselves, whether we are in the faith. Is He truly our foundation? If we find He alone is what our life is built upon, then we have the promise that our lives will withstand the floods that

will come (2 Timothy 2:19<sup>xxvi</sup>). If not, Jesus has warned us of what is coming when we face the inevitable storms with a foundation of sand.

Matthew's version of this message says Jesus said the foolish man built his house on the sand (Matthew 7:26<sup>xxvii</sup>). What is sand? It is the passing things of this life. It is the ever-shifting priorities and pleasures of this world.

This morning you have come, and hopefully it was to hear what Jesus had to speak to your heart in His Word. And His Word declared to us that the fruit of our lives shows us what kind of heart we have. We are either living in Jesus or we are full of ourselves, and the words that come from our mouths can cut through our justifications and reveal the truth of the condition of our hearts. Jesus then asked why we would call Him Lord but not do what He tells us.

Then He followed it with a parable about two different ways to build a house. He gave us a promise that our house will stand through the storms if we build it upon a foundation. **The Scriptures tell us Jesus is the only real foundation for a life (1 Corinthians 3:11<sup>xxviii</sup>).** But the life without the foundation of Jesus, the life built on the shifting sand of this world's priorities, will collapse when the storm hits. Both the fruit and the foundation address the issue of the condition of our hearts.

As I was going over this sermon last week, I couldn't get home because of the flood. It reminded me of the past years of a hundred year flood we had in the 90s. My grandfather told me it would come. He had seen water rise up into the Tlaquepaque area long before Tlaquepaque was there. Sure enough, it did come. They just didn't keep records back in my grandfather's day, so they thought it was a new record. Jesus is much better at predicting the future than my grandfather was. A flood is coming in every life. Every house will be tested. It is the love and mercy of God that tells us to come, hear, and obey by making Jesus our first love, so that when that flood hits, your house will stand.

## Questions

- 1 Without humility knowledge becomes \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 How can we tell the quality of a tree?
- 3 What is the fruit of a human life?
- 4 "No Lord!", is an \_\_\_\_\_. "Yes, Lord!" is \_\_\_\_\_.
- 5 What three actions are required for a good foundation?
- 6 What will challenge every home? Examples?
- 7 What is the promise to those on a good foundation?
- 8 What is the warning to those with no foundation?
- 9 What is a sandy footing?
- 10 What issue do both the fruit and foundation address?

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### <sup>i</sup> **Luke 6:37 (ESV)**

<sup>37</sup> "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven;

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ii **Galatians 6:1 (KJV)**

<sup>1</sup> Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.

iii **John 8:31-32 (KJV)**

<sup>31</sup> Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, *then* are ye my disciples indeed; <sup>32</sup> And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

iv **Matthew 5:28 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

v **Psalms 119:68 (ESV)**

<sup>68</sup> You are good and do good; teach me your statutes.

vi **Revelation 12:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> And I heard a loud voice in heaven, saying, "Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come, for the accuser of our brothers has been thrown down, who accuses them day and night before our God.

vii **Hebrews 4:16 (ESV)**

<sup>16</sup> Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

viii **Galatians 5:22-23 (ESV)**

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,

<sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

ix **1 Corinthians 13:7 (ESV)**

<sup>7</sup> Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

x **Romans 2:1-3 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Therefore you have no excuse, O man, every one of you who judges. For in passing judgment on another you condemn yourself, because you, the judge, practice the very same things.

<sup>2</sup> We know that the judgment of God rightly falls on those who practice such things.

<sup>3</sup> Do you suppose, O man—you who judge those who practice such things and yet do them yourself—that you will escape the judgment of God?

xi **Romans 2:21-24 (ESV)**

<sup>21</sup> you then who teach others, do you not teach yourself? While you preach against stealing, do you steal? <sup>22</sup> You who say that one must not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? <sup>23</sup> You who boast in the law dishonor God by breaking the law. <sup>24</sup> For, as it is written, "The name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you."

xii **Philippians 2:3 (ESV)**

<sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

xiii **James 1:26 (ESV)**

<sup>26</sup> If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his heart, this person's religion is worthless.

xiv **Matthew 12:33-37 (ESV)**

<sup>33</sup> "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. <sup>34</sup> You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. <sup>35</sup> The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. <sup>36</sup> I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, <sup>37</sup> for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

xv **Romans 14:1-4 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> As for the one who is weak in faith, welcome him, but not to quarrel over opinions. <sup>2</sup> One person believes he may eat anything, while the weak person eats only vegetables. <sup>3</sup> Let not the one who eats despise the one who abstains, and let not the one who abstains pass judgment on the one who eats, for God has welcomed him. <sup>4</sup> Who are you to pass judgment on the servant of another? It is before his own master that he stands or falls. And he will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

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<sup>xvi</sup> **Matthew 18:15 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother.

<sup>xvii</sup> **Galatians 6:1-2 (ESV)**

<sup>1</sup> Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. <sup>2</sup> Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

<sup>xviii</sup> **2 Corinthians 13:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> Finally, brothers, rejoice. Aim for restoration, comfort one another, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

<sup>xix</sup> **Ephesians 4:15-16 (ESV)**

<sup>15</sup> Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup> from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

<sup>xx</sup> **Acts 20:28-30 (ESV)**

<sup>28</sup> Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

<sup>29</sup> I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;

<sup>30</sup> and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.

<sup>xxi</sup> **Matthew 24:12 (ESV)**

<sup>12</sup> And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.

<sup>xxii</sup> **Galatians 1:10 (ESV)**

<sup>10</sup> For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.

<sup>xxiii</sup> **John 8:31 (ESV)**

<sup>31</sup> So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed him, "If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,

<sup>xxiv</sup> **Galatians 2:20 (ESV)**

<sup>20</sup> I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

<sup>xxv</sup> **2 Corinthians 13:5 (ESV)**

<sup>5</sup> Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!

<sup>xxvi</sup> **2 Timothy 2:19 (ESV)**

<sup>19</sup> But God's firm foundation stands, bearing this seal: "The Lord knows those who are his," and, "Let everyone who names the name of the Lord depart from iniquity."

<sup>xxvii</sup> **Matthew 7:26 (ESV)**

<sup>26</sup> And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not do them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand.

<sup>xxviii</sup> **1 Corinthians 3:11 (ESV)**

<sup>11</sup> For no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ.