

Well good morning and welcome to Trace, if you are new here my name is Aaron and I am one of the pastors around here. As many of you know I have been out for the last 3 weeks, and instead of teaching I have been trying to figure out everything I can to see if we can move forward with our new potential church home (pic of new building). If you remember this is not a done deal yet, so we have been getting inspections, talking with our lender, doing evaluations, and getting estimates on what it will take to renovate the building. So far everything is a green light but we have until the middle of this summer to determine if we are going to move forward or not. We are also in the process of talking with some potential missional partners that could lease some space and reduce the overall cost for us. So please do me a favor and commit all of this to prayer as we seek God's guidance in this season. Pray

Well if you have your Bibles with you and I hope you do, make your way over to Matt 7, today we are actually concluding our study through the sermon on the mount that we have been in since the beginning of February. And I don't usually title my sermons, but if I were to title this sermon, I would call it "Build a Better Foundation." Now, before we jump into our text for today, lets take a moment to recap both what we have learned and what Jesus wants us to walk away with as we conclude the most important sermon Jesus ever preached. First, many of us would admit that even though we believe this book to be true, we often approach life on our terms, and allow the teachings of this world to guide us more than God Himself. Which is why Jesus introduced us to this new concept he would refer to as the Kingdom of Heaven. And the Kingdom of Heaven is not something we simply look forward to one day, but something we can invite into our lives today. And here's the crazy part, Jesus said when we live our lives according to his teaching, we actually invite the Kingdom of Heaven onto this earth. And how do we do that, well first we repent and leave our life of sin. We elevate humility over power, we learn to trust God instead of worry about things out of our control, we pursue a personal relationship with God over religious hypocrisy, we learn to love our enemies, we don't settle for spiritual passivity, we wake up every day to pursue God and his purpose for our lives. We give, fast, and pray, not our of spiritual performance, but to experience the real presence of God in our lives. This

and so much more is what it means to be a part of the Kingdom of Heaven. But here's the problem, especially with western Christianity, it's not whether or not we know these things, the question is how committed are we to doing them consistently. Are we allowing our spiritual complacency and the consumer mindset in each of us to be challenged, or are we catering to it. And depending on how you answer that question will determine the kind of foundation you build for your life, don't take it from me, listen to the words of Jesus as he concludes the sermon on the mount.

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. 25 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. 26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and **does not put them into practice** is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." 28 When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, 29 because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law." Matt:7:24-29 (NIV)

You see both the wise and foolish builder both had access to the same sermon, they heard the same information, so the result wasn't an issue of having the right information, the issue was implementation. Church, our problem today isn't a lack of the right information, our problem is usually procrastination and implementation. How many of us have started out a new year with the best of intentions to make some changes in our life so that we could maybe be a better place a year from now, only to find ourselves still struggling with the same unhealthy habits and behaviors. When I used to be a strength and conditioning coach I would often make this statement to my clients and/or athletes. **The best of intentions will get you at this exact same place at this exact same time next year with the exact same results. If you want to see real and lasting change, you have to consistently apply and live out what you are learning.** While we are on the subject of exercise let me share this with you. **Recently there was an article in the Wall Street Journal that explored the growth of exercise apparel. Apparently the**

market in the US has increased by 50%. Can anyone guess, what was the #1 most popular item sold in exercise apparel? Yoga pants. Huge increase in sales. Do you know what hasn't increased? People exercising. Here's the parallel. Reading God's word, knowing it, even memorizing it, but not implementing it, is like wearing yoga pants without exercising and expecting a six pack.

In Jesus's parable about the wise and foolish builder, you have two builders with same information, but then end up with two very different foundations. The wise builder represents good implementation, the foolish builder represents procrastination and spiritual passivity. And ready, the storm didn't make the difference, the storm revealed the difference. When you consistently implement the teachings of Jesus into your life, its amazing how strong of a storm you can survive. And I know you understand this, but you cannot merely rely on Sunday mornings to be all that you need to build a better foundation. **Water bottle illustration**

So how is this playing out in our lives right now. Maybe you heard love your enemies, but you are still holding onto the grudge. You heard be anxious for nothing but you still find yourself worrying about so many things that are out of your control. You heard Jesus when he said you can't serve both God and money, and where your treasure is that is where your will be also, but you are still chasing after it as if money can offer you more than God can. You heard forgive as you have been forgiven, but you have chosen to hold onto the hate and bitterness giving it permission to steal the joy of the Lord from your life. You heard Jesus when he said don't be quick to judge others when you have plenty of crap in your own life you need to deal with first, but you still find yourself judging others more harshly because somehow the sin they struggle with is worse than the one you struggle with. Trace, We all heard the same things, but the difference is some of us will build on it while others don't. When I think of good implementation I think of what the Psalmist says in **Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit**

in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.” Psalm 1:1-3 That is how you build a strong foundation.

Here’s the reality, the rest of this year has some storms in the forecast. And when they come, they will reveal what we have either decided to put off, or put in place. When those storms come, and they will, may they not find us in a season spiritual passivity, but instead practicing the presence of God in our lives. I pray that the storms of your life reveal that you have chosen to be firmly planted in the word of God, not simply listeners of God’s word, but doers. Now, before we conclude today I want to take a small detour from how you are personally living this out, to how we as a church can build a better foundation. And this is incredibly important for us in this season, because as our church makes a bigger impact for God’s Kingdom, Satan is taking notice and developing a plan. And so what I want to do to close out our time together is talk about 10 things we can do, to build a better foundation as church.