

THE PRAYER OF THE DAY (In Unison) Almighty God, in Your kindness You give us sinners rest in the Gospel of Your Son. By the working of Your Holy Spirit, help us to share the Good News of salvation that all who hear it may rejoice in the gift of Your unending love; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

THE GOSPEL LESSON Matthew 7:24-27

(Jesus calls God's people to Hear AND Do what God says in his Word.)

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock.

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. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it."
(ESV)

NIV - 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."

INTRO - Please take out your bulletins and turn again to the Confession of faith. This is more a promise of commitment than a statement of faith, it is the Lutheran Women's Missionary League Pledge. It can help us understand what Jesus is saying today. Please say it with me again.

In fervent gratitude for the Savior's dying love and for His blood bought gift of redemption, we dedicate ourselves to Him with all that we are and have, and in obedience to His call for workers in the harvest fields, we pledge Him our willing service wherever and whenever He has need of us. We consecrate to our Savior our hands to work for Him, our feet to go on His errands, our voices to sing His praises, our lips to proclaim His redeeming love, our silver and our gold to extend His kingdom, our will to do His will, and every power of our life to the great task of bringing the lost and the erring into eternal fellowship with Him.

Do you understand what this is saying? The ladies of the LWML, and we as we join them, are saying we have not only heard about Jesus' love, but we want our lives to respond to his love in actions.

I. That actually echoes Jesus' call in today's Gospel, Jesus' call to hear and act on His Word.

A. Jesus told a parable about two men who built houses. One man built on rock, and it stood. The other built on sand, and that house did not stand the storms of life.

1. Look at verse 24. Jesus says, **"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. Jesus is calling the people of his day, not just to hear his Word, but to follow it with the actions of their lives.

2. Look at verse 26. **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.** Jesus is saying that ultimately hearing His Words, but not following them is futile. Unfortunately it was the way of many in Jesus' day, and also many today.

- B. So, Jesus is saying that what is built on Him and on His Word is what will really last.
 - 1. The life built on the Words of Jesus with faith and love, this life is not only for this world, but ultimately lives eternally with God in heaven.
 - 2. When you build in this life, whether it is your career, your home, your community, when you build on the words of Jesus with faith and love, even if some of it passes with this world, it has a more lasting quality. That is because the material things of this world are temporal. But, the love of Jesus, the hope of Jesus, the Joy of Jesus lasts.
- C. Now some of you may say, but pastor I tried that, but I ran into trouble.
 - 1. I tried sharing my faith at work, but I was told to stop. Or, I thought I was sharing my faith in my home, and we still had troubles. Or, I tried to be a Christian in my community, but others weren't Christian and were offended.
 - 2. We need to be honest and realistic. We are sinful people who are not perfect, even when trying to live the Word of Jesus. We live in a sinful world that resists the Gospel of our Lord.
 - 3. But, and I can assure you this, but, where Jesus' words and Jesus love shone through your faith and your actions, even if you were rejected or had troubles, your job, your home, your community was better in a way that lasts than if you had not responded to Jesus' words.
 - 4. What is built on Jesus and on His Word really lasts.

II. This week I came home and was talking to my youngest son, and my wife, remembering the example in last week's sermon about Fathers, caught me preaching one thing and doing another. In pointing out my son's mistakes, all my words were criticism, and there was little love. Her statement to me, 'So, was that your one minute of conversation with your son today?' Ooooo.

- A. It is important to be honest with ourselves about Jesus' call in our lesson.
 - 1. Jesus may call us to hear and to do His words.
 - 2. But you know and I know, like me with my son. Even when we try, we fail.

- B. And, if you want to get totally honest about our lives, if we listen to what Jesus is saying here in Matthew, we don't even come close.
 - 1. Our Gospel for today is the end of the Sermon on the Mount.
 - 2. The sermon on the mount is a radical call to follow Jesus.
 - 3. Much of this is telling people to live lives of obedience and faith, and love, and forgiveness that goes beyond the normal . . . that is . . . well, that is Christ like.
 - A. According to Matthew 5, People aren't just to refrain from murder, but anger and harsh words.
 - B. And People aren't just to refrain from adultery, but from lust.
 - C. People aren't just to love those who love them, but love their enemies.

D. According to Jesus in chapter 6, People are to trust God to provide by storing up treasure in heaven rather than treasure on earth.

C. Jesus calls us to hear AND DO his word. We often fail and sin.

III. Did you watch any of the golf tournament called the President's Cup a couple of weeks ago. It was a match play tournament. Instead of counting strokes, score is kept by the number of holes won. So, if there are 4 holes left, and one team is up by 5 holes, they know they have won the match. That happened a couple of weeks ago, so they just quit playing. The Americans actually, knew they had lost that match, so why keep trying if it wasn't going to work.

A. Unfortunately, that can be the reaction of some to what we hear Jesus saying in our lesson.

1. If I am to hear and do Jesus' words, and if I am a sinner who fails, why keep trying?

2. When we just hear the law, it can be discouraging, and at times I do see people who know they will always struggle giving up. They stop trying to live God's Word.

B. But, let me tell you a little more about the sermon on the Mount.

1. This sermon is a radical call to discipleship, but ultimately what it does, as it shows us the law, is show us that we need a Savior. The sermon on the Mount points us to Jesus.

2. The first words from Jesus' mouth in this section of Scripture are Matthew 5:3, "**Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**" These are also the words of Jesus to be heard AND DONE, actually the main words.

3. This is Jesus calling people to know that they are poor in God's sight because of their sin, and we need Jesus to come before God. We need his perfect sinless life, and his forgiving death on the cross, and his victory giving rising from the dead, because we are sinners and fail.

C. Do you understand what this means, because we are forgiven of our failure and sin, we don't have to give up, because Jesus gives us a new start.

1. We may hear and not always do. When we confess our sin and believe in Jesus He forgives.

2. Amazingly, God knew our sin, and sent His son to die for us anyway.

3. For those of you who are struggling with life, and if we are honest, we all do, we don't have to give up. By His forgiveness Jesus makes it so we can hear, and keep on working to do what He says. And, by His strength we actually do grow.

D. That, good new, the Gospel of Jesus, by the way is what gives life.

1. That is why the women of the LWML have not just been Lutherans, and not just be women, but been ladies who do missions. They tell others about the life giving savior, and His Words.

2. In telling others, guess what, they are hearing. . . and doing.

CONCLUSION - Look at the quilts around you. All our pews have quilts which our ladies made as another way of sharing the love of Jesus with others. Do you see the labels on them? They say 'Put together in the Spirit of the love of Christ.' These quilts not only say our ladies have heard Jesus, they are doing what He says and sharing Jesus with others. These quilts have gone to people in Iraq and New Orleans, in Africa and Anchorage. To the Ladies of the LWML at St.

John who meet, who quilt, who give mites, who pray for the missions of our Lord, who hear God's Word and because of Jesus' forgiveness, seek to do it, Thank you.

I pray that the Word of God may so live in our hearts that we not only hear it, but we do it.