

“What Sort of Man is This?": Part One, His Life

Matthew 7:24 ESV “Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. **25** 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. **26** 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. **27** 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.”

- I. For the past two weeks, we have been discussing Paul’s comment that he makes in 1 Corinthians where he says, “no one can lay a foundation other than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ”.
 - A. Two weeks ago we discussed how being the foundation of the church means that Jesus has purchased for himself the right to be the church’s “all in all” (the one who receives the entirety of her submission and praise) because of what he accomplished in the work of redemption.
 - B. Last week we discussed how there is no hope for Christ to be foundation of the church if he is not first the foundation of individual believers; that our purpose is to grow “to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ”, as Paul says in Ephesians 4.
 - C. This week, as I was considering the third chapter in the series on Christ’s role as the foundation of the church, I felt that the Lord impressed upon me that we should revisit the Jesus of the Bible.
 1. I felt he was impressing upon me how difficult it would be to understand him as the foundation if we don’t truly ponder who he was during the time we know as “the incarnation”; the 33 years he dwelt among us in flesh and blood on planet earth.
 2. I felt like it was imperative that we consider again the incomparable life he lived, the brutal death he died, his victorious resurrection, and the proclamation made by his ascension to Heaven in power.
 3. In his discussion of the foundation of the church being Jesus, Paul says, “Let each one take care how he builds upon it”. It is impossible to know how to build on the foundation if we don’t take time to understand the foundation himself.
 - D. If the Lord wills, we will return to Paul’s discussion of building on the foundation on a few weeks, as there is much left to be said, but for now let’s turn our full attention to the story of the Savior, Jesus Christ.
- II. Now, as we begin, I can almost hear the muffled sighs of frustration as you say to yourself, “C’mon Marc! How about some deeper insights! How about some clever spin on something we haven’t heard before!” But let me caution you! It is never safe to assume you have Jesus figured out!
 - A. There came a time when the disciples had been traveling with Christ for awhile. They had heard him teach with authority, seen him perform countless miracles of

healing, and watched as he demonstrated his authority over both unclean spirits and religious big shots.

1. They were the inner circle, the entourage, the ones who had seen the moments hidden from the public eye. They knew him better everyday. They felt as though they could predict what he would do next. They were starting to figure him out.
 2. But one day, Jesus called them into their boat to cross the Sea of Galilee. Something they had done, many, many times before.
- B. As the boat set out across the open water, Jesus began to yawn and stretch. Perhaps he said to his disciples that day, “We’ve been so busy meeting the needs of the people! I’m bushed! I’m going to lay down and try to catch a few ‘z’s’.”
1. And so he did. Mark says that he laid down on a cushion in the boat, and went peacefully to sleep.
 2. But shortly thereafter, the white, puffy clouds turned dark and began to fill up the once blue sky above the sea. As the winds picked up, I imagine Peter, James, and John, who we know were career fishermen, thought, “OK, we’ve seen this before. It’ll die down (Oh please let it die down!).”
- C. But just the opposite happened! The winds picked up until it was impossible to steer their little craft and the water was breaking over the side of the boat, already threatening to fill their boat up if the winds didn’t capsize it first!
1. In the light of these developments, the feigned confidence of these sun-leathered, veteran sailors gave way to full-scale panic as **everyone** in the little boat knew that their doom was sealed and that they would never get out of this alive!
 2. Everyone, that is, except the peaceful sleeper on the cushion in the bottom of the boat.
- D. Completely resigned to their fate, they abruptly waken the slumbering savior, with a fear-inspired accusation: “Teacher! Don’t you care that we’re about to die?!?”
1. But instead of panicking, and instead of sympathizing with their seemingly justifiable fears, Jesus does the strangest thing. He rebukes them, saying, “Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?” “**Why are we afraid?!?** Are you kidding me?!?”
 2. Then he looks at the storm (Although he is usually portrayed in the films as using an authoritative Victorian accent, I prefer to imagine that he was a little groggy, maybe with a slight hint of an escaping yawn!), and says, “SHUT UP!” Or, if you prefer the KJV, “Peace! Be Still!”
 3. And the storm immediately stops! All three Gospel writers that share this story say “and there was a great calm”!
 - a) Although this story carries great significance for us about how we should never fear in the storms of life because of Jesus’ authority; or how that we can’t go down as long as Jesus is in the “boat” of our life, I want to focus this morning, not on the miracle, but on the response to it...
 - b) m?”

- E. These guys, who had walked with Jesus, talked with Jesus, watched Jesus, and listened to Jesus, and thought they had him figured out, can now only gaze upon him and say, “**Who are you?**”
 - F. Did you enter into this worship center this morning having Jesus all figured out, or is there still room in you to be amazed by him? Though you may have called yourself a Christian for decades, can you still look upon him and acknowledge that you haven’t figured him out?
- III. The God we serve will always represent to us a paradox. He reveals himself to us, but have we really unravelled the mystery of who he is? He calls us to know him, and yet there is always more to know.
- A. **Psalm 97:2a ESV** Clouds and thick darkness are all around him...
 - 1. Is the Psalmist here contradicting John when he says, “God is light and in him is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5)”?
 - 2. Not at all! John is speaking of the “darkness” of sin and depravity, the Psalmist is speaking of the “darkness” of mystery.
 - 3. It’s like when you look for hidden treasure. He saying that God has concealed himself and delights in being found out.
 - B. “No one would dare say it with their lips, but plenty of people live as though they believe they know God like the back of their hands. The Christian life is thrilling precisely because we know so little about our heavenly husband. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts (Isaiah 55:9)’...Try this. The next time you pray, or study the Scriptures, or worship, imagine yourself in a restaurant. Your spouse it’s across the table from you. His name is Jesus. What would you feel? How would you act? I doubt you’d stare at your plate and look passively around the room. The Messiah is sitting across from you. There are unsearchable riches in him. He lived in eternity before you ever met him.” - Alan Wright
 - 1. Even after Jesus came to planet earth to show us the Father, even after he redeemed our lives from the curse of sin and showed us the way to be reconciled with God, he still wants us to dig deep! He wants us to search him and long to know him.
 - 2. The New Testament doesn’t portray your salvation as the conclusion of some spiritual journey you were on; rather...
 - a) It is the beginning of a romance wherein you will discover something new about your lover each and every day!
 - (1) **Isaiah 43:9 ESV** Behold, I am doing **a new thing**; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
 - (2) **Lamentations 3:22 ESV** The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; **23 they are new every morning**; great is your faithfulness.
 - b) Secondly, it is the start of a new family, wherein you have be adopted out of poverty and into love like you could never imagine, and the wealth of a King at your disposal!
 - (1) **Matthew 7:7 ESV** “Ask, and **it will** be given to you; seek, and **you will** find; knock, and **it will** be opened to you. **8** For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it

will be opened. **9** Or which one of you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? **10** Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? **11** If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, ***how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!***

(2) Do you think you're going to find a promise of love like that somewhere out in the world? Think again! Many of us have tried and come up empty.

c) Thirdly, this is the beginning of a quest and a real adventure that puts the Lord of the Rings, Star Wars, and Harry Potter all to shame! Is that what your soul craves? Or do you just want to grow old and die peaceably in your beds always knowing what's around every corner?

(1) **Romans 11:33 ESV** Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways!

(2) **Jeremiah 33:3 ESV** Call to me and I will answer you, and will tell you great and hidden things that you have not known.

C. God has big plans for you through Jesus! If life is humdrum, lifeless and boring, you just haven't really gotten to know Jesus! Romance, acceptance, and adventure can all be a part of life like you've always desired, but only dreamed possible! But it is possible through Jesus.

IV. Once again, I can hear loudly the silence of some of you.

A. Maybe you say you've heard it before. You see faith in Jesus as something that promises big and delivers small. It is over-advertised. Talk of adventure simmers down to nothing more than boring Bible studies, passionless prayer meetings, sleep-inducing sermons.

B. But these viewpoints are nothing more than the conclusions of spectators. Get in the boat. It's easy to criticize the fear and panic of the disciples, but hey, at least they were in the boat, right? You haven't lived until you've crossed the sea of life with Jesus on board!

1. You'll get in thinking you've got him figured out, but by the time you arrive on the other side you will have seen his unwavering peace even when the storm comes.

2. If you get in the boat, you may hear his rebuke saying, "Why is your faith so small! Don't you know yet you can trust me?", but you will also notice that he responds to your cry when you're in trouble.

3. But mostly if you really get in the boat, you will see his authority! Winds and waves can't say "no" to him! Neither can the devil...or sickness...or depression...or fear...or lack. You will find that he alone is in charge.

a) He not only commands waves, he walks on top of them, because he's in charge!

b) Demons come out of people in his presence, because he's in charge!

c) Religious know-it-alls go silent and back away in his presence because he's in charge!

- d) Tax collecting cheaters repent, paying restitution with a glad heart, and adulteresses caught in the act “go and sin no more” from his presence because he’s in charge.
 - e) Skeptics who once loudly doubted fall before him in worship, declaring, “My Lord and My God” because he’s in charge.
 - f) Death has to make way for him, because he’s in charge!
 - g) And one day, every atheist, religionist, secularist, republican, democrat, male, female, Jew, Gentile, red person, yellow person, brown person, black person, and white person will fall on their faces, proclaiming loudly with their tongues that he is Lord, because he’s in charge.
- C. Can we get super honest for a moment?
1. Is your experience of Jesus one of romance that thrills your soul? Or has familiarity bred contempt between you and your beloved?
 - a) **Matthew 24:12 ESV** And because lawlessness will be increased, *the love of many will grow cold.*
 - (1) There are many factors that cause us to become cold and distant in our relationship with Jesus, but none so great as the distraction and seduction of sin’s lies.
 - (2) Sin will always promise infinitely much, and deliver infinitely little. It is an indisputable fact that the man or woman who surrenders to any sin, blatant or subtle, overt or covert, does so because they believe a lie.
 - (3) “This will make you happy! This will cause you to succeed! This will make you feel loved!” But like the the first deception perpetrated on the human race so long ago, that their eyes would be open and they would be “like God”, it is all lies.
 - b) **Revelation 2:4 ESV** But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. **5** Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first.
 - (1) Remember, Repent, Return. This is the simple prescription to fall back into love.
 - (2) The beauty of this, however, is that as you remember what you once had, repent of your wandering, and return to the sweet, soul thrilling acts of love that you lavished on your savior at the beginning, you will find that he has never stopped wooing you!
 - (3) **Hosea 2:14 ESV** “Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her.
 - c) When the romance feels cold, the best thing you can do is get in the boat! He will show you a side of himself you never knew was there every time!
 2. Is your experience of Jesus one of unshakable acceptance? Do you realize that you have been adopted and not simply “rescued”? Do you understand the difference?
 - a) I recently watched the 2006 Kevin Costner / Ashton Kutcher film, “The Guardian” about coast guard rescue swimmers. The movie does a great job portraying the heroism and selflessness of the brave men who risk their lives, jumping in to choppy seas to pull those in danger out.

- b) Although we know that Jesus did something even greater for us by pulling us out of the waves of sin, I don't think the analogy of rescue is strong enough.
 - (1) In the movie, the rescue swimmers were doing an admittedly heroic job. But at the end of the day, they were simply doing a job. Why do I say that? Because in the movie, when they brought the nearly drowned person back to the tarmac, that person would be loaded into an ambulance and their part of the story was done.
 - (2) What Jesus did was so much more. Jesus not only rescued us, but he made us his own. People who are simply rescued may have plenty of gratitude, but rarely a relationship.
 - c) Do you ever approach Jesus like he was just "doing his job" at the cross? If you do, then you don't understand the gospel! Jesus was not just your rescuer, he has brought you into his family!
 - d) All through the New Testament, the language of redemption is the language of family; we have been made adopted sons and daughters, brothers and sisters...a bride! And what a guarantee of closeness that gives!
 - (1) **Psalm 27:10 ESV** For my father and my mother have forsaken me, but the Lord will take me in.
 - (2) **Psalm 68:6a ESV** God sets the lonely in families, he leads out the prisoners with singing...
 - e) If you are lonely and feel forsaken, you don't know him well enough! Get in the boat! It's there that you best find that he will never leave you or forsake you!
3. Is your experience of Jesus one of unending adventure, or have you happily settled for routine, ceremony, ritual? In a word, have you settled for empty religion in an institution instead of faith in a living Savior?
- a) A great story is loaded with adventure. However, to the characters in the story, adventure never looks like adventure, it just looks like peril! You have to keep turning pages until the dragon is slain and the princess is rescued!
 - b) The story of the Gospel is great, because God loved us enough to make sure we knew the end of the story! Spoiler alert: Jesus wins, the dragon has been slain and we are the princess!
 - (1) The reason we avoid putting ourselves at risk for the cause of his name and his kingdom can only be because we are not familiar enough with the hero or the ending!
 - (2) But remember he is a hero that, controls nature, silences unclean spirits, heals disease, and conquers sin! He stands up to Rome, to Jerusalem, and to and to death Hell itself and comes out victorious, sweeping us up in his arms!
 - c) Want adventure? Get in the boat! Yeah, you may have to face a storm, but you won't go down! The ending has already been written! And when you get to the other side, you'll know him in ways you sure don't know him now!