

A man who was known for his quality built homes, insisted on using the finest materials and the best contractors. He kept a list of those he knew he could depend on, those he could count on for quality work. Before the contractor and his wife set out on a long trip to celebrate a big anniversary, he sat down with his son and laid out the blueprints for a particular house he wanted his son to work on. He said, "Son, you know your mom and I are going to be gone for a long time which will give you ample time to build this home. Will you take on the responsibility of building this home for me in my absence?"

He said, "I sure would, Dad. Be happy to do it." "Well, I know you can do it, son, but let me ask you: Will you also use the finest quality materials in the building of this home?" "I will Dad." "Son, will you also use the finest and best of contractors that we've grown to know over the years so well, those with experience?" "Dad, you can count on me." The dad said, "Son, I'll be proud of you – I know I will, please take care of it. Your mom and I will be back."

The parents went away and were gone long enough for the house to be built. The son had his own way of looking at things and decided there were ways he could save quite of a bit of money. Instead of using 2" x 6"s as his dad had put in the blueprints, he used 2" x 4"s. He cut corners everywhere that he could and found contractors who would do it much more cheaply than those he had ever used before. When his father came home and went to see the house, from the outside it looked beautiful. Only the son and those who worked on the house knew the kinds of materials and workmanship that went into it. The father didn't know this.

The father looked at his son and said, "Son, I can't tell you how proud of you I am this day." He asked him, "Son, did you use the best materials?" "Yes Dad." "Did you use the best contractors?" "Yes I did Dad," he said, lying to his father. And his father said, "I am so proud of you." Reaching into his pocket for the keys, he said, "Son, I know that you and Alice are going to get married next year – this is your mother's and my gift to you."

Can you imagine the look on the son's face? Would he have cut corners if he knew he was building the house for himself and his bride? I doubt it. But how about us? Do we cut corners when it comes to building our spiritual house, our house of faith? Do you let other things keep you from worship, from personal Bible reading or prayer? Are you too busy to be part of a small group Bible study? What are you building your life on?

Jesus told a story about a foolish and a wise builder. He said the foolish man builds his house on the sand. When I lived in Ventura, California, I saw houses that were built on the sand of the Santa Paula River. Usually there was just a trickle of water running through the river. But if you took a close look, you could see that the river bed was much wider. When the heavy rains came

in the coastal mountains, the Santa Paula would flood and those houses built on the sand would literally end up in the Pacific Ocean. It is foolish for us to build our lives on things that don't last, on things that can be swept away by the storms of life.

On the other hand, Jesus said that the wise man builds his house on the rock. A house with a rock solid foundation is more likely to withstand wind and rain and storms. Unlike the houses built in the river bed, the house that were set back a ways from the Santa Paula River were never threatened. They had a solid foundation.

If it is wise to build a house on a good foundation, it is wise for us to build our lives on a solid foundation. Jesus Christ is the Rock that we can build upon. We know that the rains and storms of life will come, but Jesus is the Rock that stands firm. Faith in Jesus Christ is the foundation that we build on. We can count on Jesus because as Hebrews 13:8 tells us, **“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.”** Because He doesn't change, because He is always with us, because He always keeps His promises, we can count on Him.

So what is faith? Hebrews 11:1 tells us, **“Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see.”** You can have faith that someone will remember you on your birthday and send you a card, give you a present, call you on the phone. You can have faith that God will protect you on your travels and get you to your destination safely. You may even pray for the Lord to protect you on the way. You can have faith that God will see you through these tough economic times and provide for all of your needs.

But there is a type of faith that offers much more than this. It is called “Saving Faith.” There are a lot of people today who call themselves Christians, but don't have a clue who Jesus is or what He has done and continues to do for us. They think being a Christian is trying to do the right things, trying to live by the golden rule, trusting that they will get to heaven because they've been good enough. That is not the Christian Faith! The Christian faith is based on the fact that Jesus died on the cross to pay for our sins, to remove our guilt and shame, to restore us to a place in God's family. The Christian faith is based on the Good News that Jesus defeated sin and death, that his tomb was empty on Easter Sunday morning, that He is alive. The Christian Faith is the confidence that because Jesus lives, we have a new life in Him.

This is the Rock Solid Foundation that we build our lives upon. Because our lives are built on Christ, they are different. We should be different from the people who build their lives on things that don't last. The Faith that God gives us makes us new people, people who try to live in a way that brings glory and honor to God. We don't live for ourselves. We are called to a life of service. We don't come here on Sunday morning just for ourselves. We come to worship the Lord. We come to work together to reach out to those who don't know the Lord.

It is faith in God that motivates us to use our time, our abilities and our resource for the good of others and to the glory of the Lord. What are you building your life on. The wise man builds his house on the Rock. Jesus is the Rock. Build your life on Him. Amen.