Rev. Janet Doyle
Elmer Presbyterian Church
Sunday, October 16, 2022
Scripture: Matthew 7: 24-27

**Sermon: The Bedrock**

If you have ever had to evacuate your home because of a storm and the rising waters and high winds, imagine how difficult it would be to return to your home and assess the damage. Many are doing just that after hurricane Ian left a path of destruction. People are returning to muddy floors, moldy walls, and many to no structures whatsoever. All the things that make a house a home, the worldly possessions, and the things that give us memories are headed for a dumpster.

Some of the most beautiful places people want to live are located near the ocean, and some of the most expensive homes are built on sand. Think about all the homes in Florida on the coast that are no longer standing. Think of people who build houses on cliffs over the beach or near a riverbank. A storm comes or the river floods and it erodes away that cliff or riverbank. Many homes in California slide down a hill because when it rains the mudslides start forming. Rain and wind erode the soil and houses fall down. In the end, after the storm passes, the foundation is going to be what's left.

In the Parable of the Two Builders, Jesus teaches the importance of building your house on solid ground. Jesus wants us to build on a location that avoids destruction. He compared a wise builder and a foolish one. The foolish builder built his house on a nice sandy stretch by the water. It was a beautiful place to live, until the storm hit. There was no defense against the rising waters and the high winds.

In contrast, there was a wise builder. He built his house in the hills; he spent the extra time and money to firmly position it on solid rock. It was worth it. The building remained high above the flood waters and stood strong against the wind.

Jesus' story speaks volumes to our lives and teaches us that if we are going to follow Jesus, we need to know what we're building on. It's

a matter of foundations. I think Jesus' illustration of these two houses, one built on sand and the other one on solid bedrock, is something we can really understand.

There is a story about an excavator who mistakenly dug a hole a foot too deep when beginning to build a foundation to a house. They had to fill it with more dirt, but they didn't bring in the correct fill to compact the dirt. Instead, they just brought the dirt back they had dug out. On top of that, it had been pouring rain and the hole had a foot of water in it. They just dumped the dirt into it. It couldn't be compacted because it was all just mud. To make matters worse, when the guys came to set up for the foundation, they found out that the hole wasn't even in the right place, so the excavator had to come back at the last minute to dig the hole a few feet wider. It wasn't even flat or level and it wasn't solid. They poured the foundation footing on top of about two feet of mud. And the result was that there wasn't a level floor or a square corner in the house. Make sure you have a solid foundation when you start building.

Jesus wants us to think carefully about the foundation on which we build our lives. When you stand on the beach and the waves come up and wash over your legs and feet what happens to your feet in the sand? The sand moves and you don't have a sure foundation; you are standing on shifting sand. In contrast, if you are standing on a rock and the waves come and wash over your feet, nothing moves and you are still standing firm on the rock.

The house we are building is a metaphor for our whole lives. The entire house must rest on a solid foundation, not just a few parts. Jesus mentions three threats to our houses: rains, floods, and winds. What might these things look like in our everyday lives?

Financial problems, health problems, family conflicts, divorce, death of a loved one, cancer—hurricanes destroying your house or fire and you have to rebuild your life.

Perhaps the foolish builder thought he was safe. His house was standing to start with, and it was cosey and warm inside and everything was going just fine. But when the storm started and the floods came, he had no hope! His house fell flat and so did his faith.

What about our lives? When Satan brings temptations and trials to us it may feel like we are being battered by a flood and high winds and rain. Jesus is teaching us that we need to be like the wise builder. We need to listen and obey Jesus' teachings and build on the bedrock, so when difficult times come to us, and they will come, we will stand firm.

Psalm 18:2 says, "*The Lord is my ROCK and my fortress, and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust*."

First Corinthians 3:11 says to us, "*For other foundation can no one lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ*."

Jesus is our Rock, our Bedrock! He is the firm foundation that we can depend on and build our lives upon. If we obey Jesus and everything he tells us in his word, the Bible, we have the assurance that, no matter what flood beats upon us, no matter how fierce the storms of this life may get, we will never fall, we will never be moved.

Jesus wants us to put into practice in our lives his teachings, so we are not just hearers of the words but also doers of the word. This world will easily sweep us away in the floods of temptation, of depression, of despair, of hopelessness if we don't build our lives on a sure foundation.

An architect knows that a solid foundation is essential to any building. Once the foundation is laid, supports are put in, then the rest of the structure can be built. When you see the massive high rises in all the major cities you hope they are all built on bedrock and have a firm foundation.

A wise builder who hears the Word of God applies it to his or her life, and as a result, stands firmly through turbulent times. However, because the foolish builder doesn't obey or apply God's principles and instructions, he's ruined when a raging storm hits his life.

As a follower of Christ, your spiritual foundation is vital to your life, both here on earth and in eternity. Following God and submitting to his wisdom enables you to build a solid foundation based on God's values. As you base your life on him, there are a few areas you will need to

continually focus on to cultivate a strong, healthy, spiritual life and build a strong foundation and home.

Here are five key areas to having a firm foundation to build our house: Faith, family and Godly friendships, finances, food and fitness, and fellowship with other believers.

***Faith*** – trusting in God and growing your relationship with Christ is crucial. You need to seek God daily and ask him to guide you.

Second, ***family and Godly friendships*** are vital to having a healthy foundation. Let people know that you value your time with them and that you build each other up in the Lord.

Thirdly, being a good steward over your ***finances*** is a spiritual discipline that pleases God. God doesn't want us to live beyond our means.

Also fourthly, our body is God's living temple, and his Spirit resides within us. We need to keep our ***body, mind and soul healthy*** so we can continue to follow in the footsteps of the Spirit.

Lastly, it is very important to be planted in a local church where we can belong and be fed and worship with other members of the Body of Christ. We need to belong to a ***fellowship*** where we will grow and mature spiritually and use our gifts to build up the Kingdom of God.

To weather the storms of life and to please and glorify God, we must be real and be transformed and build on His foundation.

Are we going to be wise or foolish builders? The storms of life will come and what will happen to your house? A storm will reveal the quality of your house.

There is a story about an elderly master carpenter who was ready to retire. He told his employer of his plans to leave the house building business and live a more leisurely life with his wife enjoying his extended family. He would miss the paycheck, but he needed to retire. They could get by. The contractor was sorry to see his good worker go and asked if he could build just one more house as a personal favor. The carpenter said yes, but in time it was easy to see that his heart

was not in his work. He resorted to shoddy workmanship and used inferior materials. It was an unfortunate way to end his career.

When the carpenter finished his work and the builder came to inspect the house, the contractor handed the front-door key to the carpenter. “This is your house,” he said, “my gift to you.”

How would you describe your house? Are you spending time building a house of excellent quality and fine workmanship? The foundation of a house built on sand has no foundation to anchor it to. The foundation of a solid life is not emotion or worldly values or morals that change and shift. It is no wonder those houses are destroyed by storms, and we see it every day in the world, living on shifting sand.

Is there a reason why some choose to build their lives on shifting sand? The problem is that many in this world don’t commit their foundation to having Christ as their cornerstone. They don’t know the master builder. Having a life with Christ as the foundation seems too confining and dull and many in the world don’t want it. But when the storms come, the solid bedrock of Jesus is resilient to any kind of storm in our lives. In his presence we can be at peace. Whatever comes our way, we can always trust in the love, hope and enduring rock of Jesus.

**Jesus is the Rock that will never move.**

Our next hymn is “My Hope is Built on Nothing Less.” Listen to the words of the hymn and the refrain: “*On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand*.” This hymn was written in 1834 by Edward Mote. As a young boy, Edward Mote grew up neglected, spending much of his time on the streets while his parents managed a pub in London. He said of his younger days, “So ignorant was I that I did not know there was a God.” But at age 18 he heard God’s Word, and it changed his heart and his life forever. He was baptized and went on to lead a long, successful career as a cabinet maker. He wrote this song on his walk to work one day. Strong, faith-filled words that came from the heart of one sold out soul living boldly for Christ. At age 55, Mr. Mote became a pastor of a small Baptist church, and it’s reported that he never missed a Sunday in the pulpit for the next 21 years. He

left this world for his heavenly home at age 77, leaving his mark in this world through songs inspired by the heart of God.

“On Christ, the solid rock, I stand; all other ground is sinking sand.” Jesus is our bedrock that will never move.

Don’t build your life on shifting sand. Build on solid rock. That’s Jesus and his teachings. His teachings give you the strongest foundation for life. Confidently build your life on him.