

# THE KING OF KINGS: A STUDY OF MATTHEW

## The King's Arrival: A Study of Matthew 1–7

### STUDY TWENTY-FOUR

## The Secret of an Unsinkable Life

*Matthew 7:24–29*

*We shouldn't be surprised that when Jesus comes to the end of the most famous sermon He ever preached, He finishes with a story.*

—Pastor Charles R. Swindoll

**S**ERMONS that linger in our minds and touch our hearts often include a final story that reinforces the speaker's points. The most memorable stories feature relatable people, common situations, and timeless lessons that, if applied, can alter the course of our lives.

To drive home His points at the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus told a life-changing story about two builders. Each decided to construct his house on a different foundation which led to drastically different consequences. Through the course of His story, Jesus cements in His listeners' minds a lasting lesson built upon these builders' decisions. Pastor Chuck Swindoll explains:

The great sermon Jesus preached on the mountain has not been preserved simply because it is a literary masterpiece. It is here to be acted upon. We are to step into it, make its truths our own, and in doing so, discover the simple secret of an unsinkable life. That means building on the right foundation . . . *the solid Rock of Christ rather than the sinking sands of a self-made life.*<sup>1</sup>

Jesus left no one who heard His sermon wondering what to do. The question was: *Would they build their lives on His truth?* The same question applies to us. *Will we?* Jesus' parable of the two foundations presses us into action now. Storms will surely come. Lives are at stake. Let's dig into Jesus' final urgent appeal in the Sermon on the Mount and discover wisdom for a lifetime.



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Committed to Excellence in Communicating Biblical Truth and Its Application

## The Secret of an Unsinkable Life

Matthew 7:24–29



### PREPARE YOUR HEART

Have any storms swept through your life lately? Perhaps you've been affected by ill-health, or maybe you've suffered loss or endured problems at work or conflicts in relationships. Whatever your situation, receive God's Word for you today.

*Father, may I hear Jesus' words in Scripture as if I were sitting on the hillside and He were speaking them to me today. Help me to imagine His face, His caring expression, His urgent inflections. Help me build my whole life on Him, in His name I pray, amen.*



### TURN TO THE SCRIPTURES

As you read [Matthew 7:24–29](#), look for identical elements, contrasting factors, and opposite results. Also, notice the crowd's reaction when Jesus stops preaching. It was as if Matthew took a microphone into the audience and recorded the post-sermon buzz. How effective was Jesus' story? What impact did Jesus' sermon have on people, according to [7:28–29](#)?

Step into your study with this same heightened sense of wonder at Jesus, who speaks like none other because of who He is—the Son of God.



### Observation: Elements, Factors, and Results

As you observe the passage, notice the figure of speech Jesus used.<sup>2</sup> It's called a simile—a comparison using *like* or *as*. Jesus said that obeying or not obeying His teaching is *like* the actions of two builders. Jesus' illustration was so powerful and the implication so obvious that He didn't have to issue a command at the end of His message. The illustration was the imperative, and the people knew what they must do!



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### Identical Elements

How are the two main characters the same (*Matthew 7:24, 26*)?

What identical occurrence happens in the lives of both characters (*7:25, 27*)?

Each man worked hard to build his house, maybe even followed the same blueprint. Passersby would have admired both houses' sturdy walls, trim rooflines, and attractive design. They would have seen the men's families living happily in their new homes. However, the difference wasn't in the aboveground construction but in the foundation no one could see.

### Contrasting Factors

What comparison did Jesus make to the men's wise or foolish choice of foundations, according to *Matthew 7:24, 26*?



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### Opposite Results

Not until the storm struck did the builders' wisdom or folly become known. What dramatic language did Jesus use to communicate the relief for the wise man and the disaster for the foolish man (*Matthew 7:25, 27*)? How does *The Message* capture the scene?

*Floods came and winds blew against the houses. It was a severe storm. It was like a tornado that leaves splinters of wood and shards of glass where a house once stood. Life is difficult. Storms happen. It's impossible to live a full life without times getting hard.*  
—Pastor Chuck Swindoll



### Interpretation: Revealing the Foundations

In the interpretation phase of *Searching the Scriptures*, we examine the meaning of Jesus' story. First, what do the houses represent? And what does it mean to “build” a house?



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Second, what did Jesus say we are *doing* when we build our house “on solid rock” (Matthew 7:24)? And, conversely, what are we *not doing* when we build our house “on sand” (7:26)?

Third, what does the “storm” represent? What is it about a storm that reveals the unseen truth about a house’s foundation? Likewise, what is it about the stress of hardships that reveals the unseen truth about our life’s foundation?

Jesus foresaw the storms we would endure, and out of His deep love, He taught us how to live in such a way to withstand the calamities that loom on the horizon. But hearing His teaching isn’t enough. We must ground ourselves in Him and put into practice everything He said. Then, our foundation will be sure and our lives will stand through the harshest storm.

*The question isn’t, “Am I building my life?” Of course we are. Neither is the question, “Will hard times come?” Of course they will. Winds blow, rain falls, and floods rise. The real question is, “Is my foundation sure?” —Pastor Chuck Swindoll*



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### **Correlation: Hearing and Doing**

Jesus' half-brother, James, understood the vital importance of expressing our profession through practice, matching our creeds with our deeds. What did James teach about hearing and doing the Word of God (*James 1:22–24*)?

How does James' teaching mirror Jesus' parable of the foundations?



### **Application: Seeing Yourself in the Story**

We come to the end of the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew 5–7, the first main block of Jesus' teaching in Matthew's gospel.

Jesus' implied question, "Is your foundation secure?" rings in our ears just as it rang in the ears of His original listeners. Let the ringing encourage you to sink the pillars of your faith deep into the person of Jesus, our solid Rock. Then, look closely at your daily actions. The following two principles from Pastor Chuck Swindoll can guide your application.



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First, *if you're only hearing the truth, you're not prepared for life's storms.* Hearing about an approaching hurricane doesn't mean you're prepared to ride it out. You must act on what you hear. What actions do you need to take today to put into practice Jesus' teaching in His Sermon on the Mount and firm up your foundation?

Second, *if your foundation is sure, no storm will cause your life to collapse.* Storms may come in the form of tragic accidents, death of loved ones, sudden financial collapse, an enemy's attack, even the approach of the end of our own lives. It's reassuring to know our hope in Christ as our Savior is sure.

Now stand strong on your foundation every day! Use the space below to express in prayer your dependence on Christ and His principles for living during your current storm.

We end our study with the same invitation Jesus gave. Let's live a life that displays all the righteous features He so carefully blueprinted in His sermon. Build wisely and your house will stand firm.



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### A FINAL PRAYER

*Father, take me on a tour of the construction project called “my life.” Reveal any weak beams that I have laid on the shifting sand of self and help me to anchor them to the sure foundation of Your Son. What lessons of Jesus do I need to apply? What commands can I obey? Thank You for helping me withstand the howling gale of whatever storm I may face today. In Jesus’ name I pray, amen.*

#### ENDNOTES

1. Charles R. Swindoll, *Simple Faith* (Dallas: Word, 1991), 247, emphasis added.
2. To learn about Pastor Chuck Swindoll’s *Searching the Scriptures* method of Bible study, go to the Web page, “*How to Study the Bible for Yourself*.”

