

## Scripture:

Matthew 7:24-27 (CEB)

**24** “Everybody who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise builder who built a house on bedrock. **25** The rain fell, the floods came, and the wind blew and beat against that house. It didn’t fall because it was firmly set on bedrock. **26** But everybody who hears these words of mine and doesn’t put them into practice will be like a fool who built a house on sand. **27** The rain fell, the floods came, and the wind blew and beat against that house. It fell and was completely destroyed.”

This is the word of the LORD> thanks be to God.

## Where is the sand in Israel?

I went to Israel about a year ago, it was absolutely incredible. And of course I was so excited to spend a week or so in a wonderful, exciting new land... in a sandy desert that I had learned about for 23 years. Could my misunderstandings have been fixed by looking at some pictures of Israel online? Could I have glanced at a map, or a globe, or googled it? Yep! Did I do any of those things? Nope!

So when I got to Israel, I started looking around for all this SAND. I had seen Illustrated Bibles, I knew what Israel looked like... except those illustrations lied to me. (pause) There is not just fields of sand in Israel. There are two places that I saw in Israel that have enough sand to actually build a house on.

The first are the shores of the beaches. These beaches are at the Dead Sea and the Sea of Galilee. I’ll tell you this though, the “sand” at the Dead Sea is mostly chunks salt, the “sand” at the Sea of Galilee is mostly tiny shells. It’s not true “sand”.

2- The other place there is sand are the wadis. This is basically a spot similar to a river bed. But 9 times out of 10, there is not water in this riverbed. However, if you’re standing in the wadi when a storm hits the mountains, you’ve got about 10 min to get out before the water comes rushing down. I can tell you now, it is longer than a ten minute walk out of the wadi. The sides of the riverbed are steep platos, kind of like this: ---\---. You have to walk single file up and down them, sometimes helping the person behind you step off the larger rocks. Within the steep sides, are caves, where robbers would have hidden like in the Good Samaritan story. Even if you are running, it is dangerous. You will not make it.

If there is a house built on the sand, in Israel, that house is built in a flash flood area. The question is not “if rain knocks your house over, you’ll be sad, you’ll have to rebuild” the question is, “how long will you be able to hold out in a flash flood before you are killed and all of your stuff is washed away.”

That is the sand in Israel. Everything else is varying rock formations and mountains. If your house is built on the sand, you will lose everything.

### **And the rains will come.**

The part in this scripture that really gets me, is that there isn’t a question of if bad things will come. As in the wadis of Israel, there it is not the question of if it *will* rain, the question is when. When will the rain fall, when will the the floods come, and when will the wind blow? In our scripture, verse 25 and 26, when these hard times come, one participant is able to keep their house. The other loses everything, everything depends on the foundation they have built.

When will our storms come? As we are in this moment of our lives, you could be having an incredibly sunny day. It could be the most perfect day you can imagine. Sunny, warm, maybe you are on a beach or at your favorite vacation spot. This is the perfect day for you, not a storm in sight.

However, I imagine, like me, some of yall are not having the sunniest day. Maybe it is a little cold and cloudy, maybe there is a thunderstorm today, but maybe there is a category 5 hurricane sitting over your life right now.

One of my storms was last year. I spent time in Kansas City, working at a camp. I was expecting sunny days for a whole year. Unfortunately, my foundation was not on rock. My foundation was on the sand. Because I had been expecting sunny skies, I didn’t think my foundation was in trouble. However, I realized I was sinking as the storms kept rolling in one by one. I now recognize that while I was there, I was very depressed. That depression made everything else feel like my personal Category 5 Hurricane.

There were several arguments between me and my bosses. They felt I was being disrespectful and I felt they were being purposely hurtful. In the end, I left Kansas City feeling incredibly low in my faith. I knew I was supposed to go into ministry but I also knew it would take quite a bit of time to rebuild the foundation that had been so deeply shaken. Therapy has helped this rebuilding process. But it’s also been helpful to realize that I do not

need to believe what they said about me. I am stronger than the hurtful words they said, and my foundations have been moved to rock because I know they can not be the only people in ministry telling our kiddos that they matter and that they are loved. I decided to build my foundation on the Rock of God, God's call for me, and my faith in that call.

When the storms come, our foundation matters.

### **Where is your foundation?**

In our text, verse 24, the foundation is what matters for our faith. If the storms come, how are we going to survive if we are drowning before God even has time to show up and save us. I am sure the man who built his house on the sand in Israel was not expecting the rain to come quite so quickly. Maybe he assumed he had a couple months to goof around and spend time on other things rather than his foundation. But in the end, the rain came, the storms wiped out his house. He is labeled as foolish.

One definition of insanity is "trying the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result." In the case of the storms, when we keep rebuilding our foundations in sand, and expect to withstand storms we can not be surprised when our houses fall to pieces in the rains, the winds and the floods.

We are called to look at our foundations. And it could be only part of your foundation that you need to examine. It is entirely possible that you've built your house on the side of a rock. A nice rock at the edge of the water on a sunny beach. But when that Category 5 storm hits, the sand will shift. Your foundation will crumble. It's also possible that you've built your house on the tallest rock around. Maybe on top of a mountain. But we must look, and double check that our mountain is not a volcano. If our mountain is a volcano, we have a lot more to move than our foundation.

The foundation we are called to have is one that is specifically placed on God. Faith and that foundation is the only thing that will get us through our storms. The man who planted his foundation on a rock was not simply lucky. There was enough strength there to hold him and his house. The man on the sand, was not simply unlucky, he assumed the sand would be enough. However, we often find, the sand is not enough. We don't have to rebuild our house after every storm, if we scoot our foundation, the Rock will help us weather the storm.

In Kansas City, the sand my foundation was built upon was my pride. It allowed my foundation to be shaken. I believed that I was better than that camp, that I knew I could do it better. Instead, it was my sand speaking. Here, my house and my foundation are on the rock that is God, and the fact that I am called into ministry, good days, or bad days I know God is asking me to spend time learning about my ministry. Every day of my life, I am laying one more brick into my foundation on that Rock.

Now, look at your life, and your foundation. It will be hard, it may be painful. But eventually, you will find your sand. When you do, try your hardest to find ways to scoot your house, and your foundation farther onto the rock. When your wind comes, when your floods come and when the rain threatens to rip you from the rock, your foundation will stand, because you my friends, are not foolish people.

Amen.