

Scripture Reading:

Please go ahead and turn in your Bibles to **Matthew 7, Matthew 7:24-29** for our scripture reading today... We are in **Matthew 7:24-29** for ...And I will ask you to please stand if you are able to do so for the reading of God's Word...

Matthew 7:24-29

<sup>24</sup> “Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and *yet* it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

<sup>28</sup> When Jesus had finished these words, the crowds were amazed at His teaching; <sup>29</sup> for He was teaching them as *one* having authority, and not as their scribes.

**Good Morning...**It is great to be here with you this morning...If you do not know who I am, my name is Byron Bradshaw and I am privileged to be the pastor here at Calvary Bible Church...If you are new here and want to get connected...then I recommend seeing me today after the service and I would love to help you connect to the body here at Calvary...

**Before we begin, I'd like to give a couple of thank yous...**Thank you to all those that filled shoeboxes for Samaritan's purse...Thank you Robin for heading that up and thank you Bambi for taking those to the distribution center

**Thank you also to all those that came out yesterday for the Calvary work day...**We had about 20 people here yesterday painting, pressure washing, cleaning and many other miscellaneous tasks...I believe we got much done yesterday and I want to say thank you for serving us in that way...

**Before we dive in this morning let us pray together...**

**ME:**

**As we begin...This morning...I'd like to talk to you about the fundamentals...**or specifically I'd like to share with you THE most important fundamental to Christian living...

**Understanding the one essential fundamental to Christian living** can drastically affect your life...It can either lead you to a healthy flourishing stable walk with God or leaving your walk smashed upon the rocks leaving only rubble behind...

**Transition: Yet it isn't just important in Christian live to understand** the essential fundamental, but understanding the fundamentals is important in many areas of life...And is especially important in sports...

**Transition: I grew up playing many different sports and each sport has** its own essential fundamentals...**Basketball** has ball handling and proper shooting- reaching your hand into the

cookie jar...**Swimming** has proper strokes and kicks...

**Yet the sport I grew up playing the most was baseball...**It is the sport I played the most year but stunk at worst...I stunk at baseball all because I did not understand the one essential fundamental to hitting a baseball...

**ME:**

**What is the single most important** fundamental discipline for hitting a baseball?

**Any great baseball or softball coach is dedicated** to the fundamental of the sport...Right? When I was a child, I had a great baseball coach...I mean he was dedicated to every fundamental...

**He was a great coach because he first had patience...**If we messed up on the fundamentals...He'd drop the bat run out to your position and demonstrate exactly how to field or throw...I remember also that he forced us 7<sup>th</sup> grade boys to watch tape after tape, minute after minute of just the fundamentals of baseball...These are the days of VHS tapes....

**But one of the most distinctive things I remember about those** tapes was the fundamentals of a good baseball swing...There were four fundamentals of a good baseball swing...

- #1: Feet Spread
- #2: Hands Back
- #3: Power Position
- #4: Follow Through

**I remember the instructional video repeated** these four steps over and over again to drill it into a poor ADD 12 year old little boy...

**But watching tape after tape does little good unless you go...**Practice right? After watching we then went out and practiced swing after swing, practicing the fundamentals of a great baseball swing...

**Transition:** But **after a couple months of practicing these steps**, After months and months, ball after ball, pitch after pitch...**I realized something about my hitting...**My hitting never got better...I still stunk at hitting...Yet I knew the four fundamental of a beautiful swing...

**I never "grew" in my abilities** and I never really flourished in my pursuit of becoming a better baseball player...

**At the time, I could never figure out what was wrong...**Because here I am doing all the "right" things...I am practicing the four steps...My swing was a thing of beauty...my work ethic was there, my drive was there, and my ability was there...But I never got better...I never really progressed...

**At the time I never understood why...**But Now, as I look back, I realize that the single most

important fundamental of swing was missing...What is the most basic principle of batting?  
**KEEP YOUR EYE ON THE BALL...**

**KEEPING YOUR EYE ON THE BALL was the ONE essential fundamental** to becoming a good baseball hitter... You can have the prettiest swing in the world but if you do not keep your eye on the ball it is completely useless...

**I had all the appearances of a good swing but looking back,** my one essential problem was that I would not keep my eye on the ball as the ball came to the plate...

**The single most important fundamental of hitting** the ball is keeping your eye on it always...

**Transition: Yet, what is the one essential fundamental for** spiritual growth? Today, we are answering the question, "What is the single most important fundamental for spiritual growth?"

**Transition: Before we actually dive into answer this question...**I first want you to do something this morning...I want you in your mind to actually answer this question...**(Show a slide with the question on it)** If I could read your minds, I imagine your answers fall into four main categories...

**WE:**

**Category #1: Some would say that the one essential fundamental is...**

**Having a daily devotion-** Some Christians think the one absolute fundamental to spiritual growth is opening the Bible on a daily basis and hearing the Word of God...But Biblically, I am not so sure that this is the one essential fundamental...

**Friends, having a daily devotion is very important** for spiritual growth but I believe there is one that is even deeper and even more fundamental...

**Category #2: Some would say it is memorizing scripture...**

That based off of passage such as Psalm 1... that if we memorize and meditate on the Bible and stick enough stuff into our brain that we will grow spiritually...That if we fill our minds with good and holy texts that it will cause us to become more like Christ...

**Listen Friends, memorizing and meditating** on scripture is an essential component to spiritual growth but Biblically there seems to be something even more fundamental...

**Category #3: Some would say getting connected to a small group or Sunday school class...**

That based off of passage such as James 5:16, Galatians 6:2 and even Hebrews 10:24 that the one essential component to spiritual maturity is koinania...Is true lasting fellowship with other believers...

**Yes Friends, True Fellowship is an important** component to spiritual maturity But there seems to be another habit that is even more fundamental...

**Category #4: Finally, some would even say going to church every time the door is**

**open...**That based on Romans 10:17, that the single most important fundamental to spiritual maturity is consistently hearing the word of God...

**Friends, Hearing the Word of God on a regular basis** is an essential component to maturity but I am still not completely convinced...Because Look at the Pharisees...They heard the Words of Christ over and over again yet they were false prophets and false teachers...

**Transition: Just like the four steps are essential for** a good baseball swing...All four of these components are essential to a healthy growing relationship with God...But there is still one essential Biblical fundamental that if we as Christian ignore then it will always lead us to spiritual malnutrition...to spiritual atrophy...

**Today we are answering the question,** what is the single most important fundamental to Christian living...And today's answer is found in Matthew 7

**Transition: So, come with me to Matthew 7...**Matthew 7 and we will be looking at verses 24-29...

**GOD:**

**Before we dive into the verses today, I'd like to get us all caught up to where we are...**Matthew 5-7 is called the Sermon on the Mount...It is essentially a long discourse by Jesus giving us practical instruction on the Christian life...Jesus discusses the Christian life in five main sections...

**The beginning of Matthew 5 gives us the "Picture" of the Christian life,** then in Matthew 5 and 6 Jesus gives us the "Principles" of the Christian life, followed then by the "Practices" and "Prohibitions" of the Christian life in Matthew 6 and 7, and Jesus concludes the Sermon on the Mount with the "Proof" of Christian living...

**We are actually concluding the Sermon on the Mount** today and because it is the last week I plan to do a more thorough review in a later portion of the sermon this morning...

**To discover the fundamental to Christian living,** let us begin our discussion today in Matthew 7 by looking at verses 24-27,

“<sup>24</sup> **Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine** and acts on them, may be compared (more literally “will be compared”) to a wise man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and yet it did not fall, for it had been founded on the rock. <sup>26</sup> Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

**Now, the first question I have this morning about the text is, “What literary device does Jesus use here?** In order to illustrate spiritual truth, Jesus uses a metaphor comparing and contrasting two different builders...One who built his house on a rock and the other that built his

house on the sand...

**But before we really dive into compare and contrast these two builders.....**I would like us to notice first the result...

**When the rain, floods and winds came the house built on the rock** did not fall... Yet the one built on the sand, when the rain, floods and winds came it fell...

**And not only did it fall but look how it describes its fall...** Look in verse 27 “The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and slammed against that house; **and it fell—and great was its fall.**” In the Bible’s original language... Jesus is using a host of intensifiers to describe its fall... it literally says, “and it fell... and the Crash itself was HUGE... WAS GREAT...”

**Friends the house did not just fall...It SMASHED INTO A THOUSAND PIECES...**

**Now, friends let us note something here...** As I just mentioned, Jesus here is using a metaphor here... so then the houses actually represent something... **Both houses represent two different kinds of followers of Christ...**

**And Jesus is essentially** saying one Christian will hold up and the other will smash into a thousand pieces...

**Transition: Now before we talk about** the only difference between these two Christians... Let us first look at their similarities...

**Similarity #1: Both houses endure the same storm...** Both houses face the same rain, the same flood (literally rivers) and both face the same rain... **Yet One withstands and one smashes into a thousand pieces... They face the same storm yet with drastically different results...**

**When I think about the text’s reference to rain, floods and wind...** the question that really pops into my mind is... “What do the rains, floods and winds represent?” I mean if this whole passage is one giant metaphor then the rains, floods and winds must represent some aspect of the Christian life...

**Now, there is much discussion about this amongst scholars** regarding its meaning... Some Biblical scholars feel that it represents God’s final judgment which has some valid points... But it seems best based upon the context of the entire Sermon on the Mount that the rain, rivers and wind do not refer to God’s pending judgment but rather the winds and rain of life...

**Now, Everyone in this room has experienced life’s wind,** rain and rivers... These three represent the difficulties and trials in life... That every Christian faces rains and rivers in life... We all face trials yet the trials we face are all different.

**Some face rain-** rain of illness and sickness... I know of one family at Southside Baptist which the 45 father has progressive MS likely ending his life in the next couple year and also has a daughter with progressive Muscular Dystrophy likely restricting her from living into middle

age...

**Yet Some of us face rivers-** Some of face loss... the loss of a job or the loss of a loved one...The loss of a spouse or child, or even the loss of financial security...

**Yet others of us face wind-** Some of us face the wind of persecution or the betrayal of a friend...Some of us have lost family members and lifelong friends due to our decision to follow Christ to any destination He should lead...

**Transition:** Yet, there similarities do not stop at just facing the same storm...but they also share Similarity #2...

**Similarity #2: The houses are similar in appearance...** Jesus makes no distinction between the outward appearance of either house...I think Jesus is implying that the houses on the surface look the same... Some of you may be asking, "Ok, what is the significance of this observation to the Christian Life?"

**Listen, friends, the Christian that crashes** and the Christian that perseveres oftentimes look the same in the beginning...Both houses "appear" to have the same structural integrity but one falls and one stands...Oftentimes Christians "appear" the same but when trials in life comes the first Christian stand and the second Christian crashes... What is the one fundamental difference?

**Transition: Yet before we seek to answer the main difference...**Let us look at their most fascinating similarity...

**Similarity #3: Notice with me that both builders "hear" the Words of Jesus...They both** hear the words of Jesus...

**Think About It: You have two different builders representing two different groups** of Christians with two different results yet they both have the same instruction...Both sets of Christians, the one who stands and the one who falls, both hear the same instruction...Both of them hear the Words of Christ...Yet they have two vastly different results... What is the one fundamental difference?

**Transition: Yet, Both houses...Both followers of Jesus Christ face the same difficulties,** both initially look the same and both hear the same Words of Christ...BUT one remains standing and one smashes to the ground...**What is the one fundamental difference?**

**TRANSITION: What is the one essential fundamental for Christian maturity? In** order to answer this, Let us now contrast verses 24-26...

**Look at verse 24,** "Therefore everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock."

**Now Look at verse 26,** "Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not <sup>[t]</sup>act on them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand"

**What is the one fundamental difference? Both hear** the same instruction but one obeys and one does not...The house and Christians that stands ACTS upon the Words of Christ...or in other words obeys the Words of Christ...

**The single most important fundamental to spiritual growth is obedience...It isn't appearances, it isn't knowledge, it isn't memorization...**

**Listen friends...The one essential ingredient to endure** the difficulties of life...To withstand the death of a young child, to withstand bankruptcy...to withstand the hurting words of a fellow believer...to withstand and forgive the offenses of others...

**Is DOING the Word Not Just Hearing it...**

**Friends, memorizing scripture, reading your Bible, coming to church,** or growing through true fellowship is USELESS without **obedience...**

**All the spiritual disciplines in the world are useless chaff without obedience...**All the spiritual disciplines in the world without obedience eventually will pile up into self-righteousness...And eventually the pile will grow so large that it will blind us to true obedience...to truly to love God...to love others...and To Make disciples,

**Point #1: Hear and Obey To Withstand (Slide)**

**Illustration: Just as keeping your eye on the ball is** the most essential fundamental to becoming a good hitter...So, is obedience is the most fundamental ingredient to living a life withstanding rain and trials of life...

**Transition: But there is a still one more question...**Are there specific instructions to obey? Notice with me...back at verse 24, "**Therefore** everyone who hears **these words of Mine** and [\[o\]](#)acts on them..."

**What are the instructions to obey?** "These words of mine..." But then we must answer...What do "these Words of Mine" refer too?

**Now, it is important to obey all commands in the scripture** but here I believe Jesus is specifically referring to His commands and His words throughout the Sermon on the Mount...

**So, we are to obey every command in the entire Sermon on the Mount...**But there is a problem..Because let us be honest for a second...There are so many small commands and insights that it will be extremely difficult for a Christian to map out every little command and insight to obey...

**So to help us obey the Sermon on the Mount, I'd like to quickly go through** each section of the Sermon of the Mount and provide a summary of the commands of Jesus...In total, **there are 15 summarized commands** found in the Sermon on the Mount...

**Transition: Let us begin in Matthew 5:1-16 with the first 2 of 15 commands.....**Matthew 5:1-16 describes the picture of Christian living:

**(SLIDES)**

The first command comes as a summary of the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-12

**Command #1: Exude inner qualities** of Christian living to gain blessing

**Command #2: is to Exude Christ's Gospel through good works...**As Matthew 5:13-16 states "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your father who is in heaven"

**Then we come to the "Principles" of Christian Living found in Matthew 5:17-48 which I will summarize in five commands...**

#3: Do not Hate Another Matthew 5:21-22

#4: Instead Forgive And Be Reconciled (Matthew 5:23-26)

#5: Respect the Sanctity of Marriage (Matthew 5:27-32)

#6: Keep Your Word (Matthew 5:33-37)

#7: Put Away Revenge Through Forgiveness (Matthew 5:38-48)

**Then we come to the "Practice" of Christian Living...Matthew 6:1-34, Matthew 7:7-11**

#8: Be Motivated for True Godliness (Matthew 6:1-24)

#9: Seek God Rather Than Worry (Matthew 6:25-34)

#10: Never Stop Asking, Seeking and Knocking Knowing God will Answer with Good (Matthew 7:7-11)

**Then we come to the two "Prohibitions" of Christian Living...Matthew 7:1-6**

#11: Do Not Judge Rather Value Others

#12: Do Not Devalue The Gospel Sharing it without naiveté

**Then in Matthew 7:12-23, we come to the "Proof" of Christian Living...**

#13: Love Others as the Proof of Spiritual Maturity (Matthew 7:12)

#14: Walk The Narrow Road With Perseverance (Matthew 7:13-14)

#15: Discern True Prophet from False By their Fruit (Matthew 7:15-23)

**Transition: I know that was a bit of a mouth full** but let us not forget that in order to withstand life's difficulties life's rivers, rain and winds...It requires two actions: Hearing and doing the Words of Christ...

**The Point today is to Hear and Obey to Withstand...**

As I head toward closing...I'd like to zoom back into our passage this morning and answer the question, "so what"? How do I apply Matthew 7:24-29 to my life?

**YOU:**

**We Truly apply this passage to our lives really with two actions...Hearing and Doing**

**Action #1: Hearing-** Hearing the words of Christ is an essential component to withstanding the

storms of life...But how do we hear?

**Hearing Takes Self-Discipline:** Hearing takes discipline...I mean think about it: Where are the words of Christ to us today? They are here in this Book, right? (Hold up the Bible) Hearing requires us as Christians to get our nose in the Book...

**It takes discipline to read and to meditate on the scripture...To have quiet times and daily devotionals...**

**But Friends, remember hearing the Words of Christ through Daily** devotions and memorizing the scripture is essential but useless without obedience...

**Hearing Takes An Attentive Ear:** Hearing takes an Attentive Ear...What do I mean by this? Another way to put it...Hear or Read the scriptures expectantly...When we go into the Word to hear the Words of Christ let us read the scripture with an expectation that the Lord will speak and will correct our steps...

**Because I have realized there is an epidemic amongst Christians today...**Many Christians do not read the Bible with an attentive ear...How many of you have ever been reading the Bible and we get past the first few verses and then your mind wanders and then you read two chapters wondering what we just read?

**This is all too common...**Oftentimes spiritual malnutrition is not derived from a lacking of daily devotions but more a lack of an attentive ear...

**Personal Story:** I have disciplined many young men over the years and I have found this to be one of the root issue of spiritual malnutrition...I have often heard from people "Ya know Byron I am reading my Bible everyday but I am not getting anything out of it...I mean... I read my 5 chapters a day and even memorize two verses a week but it is just dry...I get bored and I get nothing out of it..."

**The problem here is not a lack of discipline but rather a lack of an attentive ear...**It is a lack of reading the scripture expectantly...Expecting God to speak to our mind and heart to activate our feet...

**Transition:** But friends the person that stops at only hearing the Words of Christ will be like a house on the sand...Disintegrating when life's wind, rain and floods rush... We must both hear and obey...

**Action #2: Obeying-** Now, remember friends, hearing is not enough...For both the house that stood and the house the crashed heard the words of Christ...But the key difference is that one obeyed and one did not...So we must ask the question, "How do we obey the scripture?"

**Obeying the Scripture requires us to look upon,** to look within, and to take personal action

**Obeying the Words of Christ requires a look upon...**Let us remember James 1:25...as it says

“But one who looks intently at the perfect law, the *law* of liberty, and abides by it, not having become a forgetful hearer but an effectual doer, this man will be blessed in what he does.”

**It requires us to look upon...**to hear or to look upon the Word of God intently...Not to stuff away in the closets of our mind but to put into action in our lives...

**But it also requires us to look within...** After we look upon...after intently looking at the scripture then we must look within...We must look within ourselves...We take the microscope from the scripture into our very being...

**Looking within requires us to look inside ourselves** for areas needing repentance and areas needing change...

**But Friends let us remember, Repentance without a change of action is not repentance...**If we are truly looking upon and within, it should force us to take personal action...to correct the direction our spiritual lives with the road map of the scripture...

**Let us repent and align our lives with the commands of scripture** and let us take personal action to become Godly men and women...

**Friends...Let us hear and obey the Words of Christ to withstand the rivers, rains and winds of life...**Friends...Let us hear the Word of Christ through discipline and an attentive ear...But let us not stop at hearing...Let us continue into obedience by looking upon, looking with-in and taking personal action...

**Friends...Watch this...The one who hears and obeys “will be”...** compared to the man who built his house on the rock...This will be a person who’s faith withstands all the rains, winds and floods of life...But both hearing and obeying are required...

**WE:**

**As I close, let us reflect upon a quote from C.S. Lewis in his book, “Mere Christianity”**

C.S. Lewis says, “[To have Faith in Christ] means, of course, trying to do all that He says. There would be no sense in saying you trusted a person if you would not take his advice. Thus if you have really handed yourself over to Him, it must follow that you are trying to obey Him. But trying in a new way, a less worried way. Not doing these things in order to be saved, but because He has begun to save you already. Not hoping to get to Heaven as a reward for your actions, but inevitably wanting to act in a certain way because a first faint gleam of Heaven is already inside you.”

**Amen**

**Let us pray...**

