

Sure Footing

²⁴"Therefore anyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵the rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against the house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against the house, and it fell with a great crash."

²⁸When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, ²⁹because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

– Matthew 7:24-29

The way of wisdom for any man seemed rather exclusive to Jesus' way of thinking. It is not enough to hear His words. It is not even enough to be amazed by them. One must embrace them and put them into practice. Jesus was not talking about slavish adherence to perceived rules in the *Sermon on the Mount* (to which this parable served as a conclusion) but loving obedience to its values and principles. To enter the kingdom, we must be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect. To even pursue that level of maturity, we depend on power and grace from Jesus. At this point in His ministry, Jesus was inviting people to become His disciples. To put His words into practice means to trust Him even through storms - especially through storms into the otherwise elusive kingdom of heaven.

Storms are a part of every life. Often, when we are in need, we ask others to pray for us. Understandably, we want relief and happy endings. On a different plane, is it possible that we are, in fact, just enlisting others around us to plead for God to stop the rain? In His sovereign wisdom, God might stop the rain. But, perhaps, a more useful prayer in the long run would be that we use such storms of testing to examine and to know that our foundation is what it should be. When our lives are built solidly on the rock of the lordship of Jesus, rains can come, streams can rise, winds can blow, but He will always empower us to stand and to endure on our journey to the kingdom.

© 2010 by R. Karl Crouch, 551 Abbeyville Road, Lancaster, PA 17603