



sermon study summary

Still Standing

INTRODUCTION

Last weekend, Pastor Ashwin completed his series 'Revive Us Again', a call to be renewed and awakened in our walk with God. This weekend's sermon: 'Still Standing', is an excellent follow-up to this series, because our Christian life is about the long haul, not just a beginning or renewal. It's normal for people to lose their 'first euphoric love for Jesus', but over time drop out of their walk with Him. However, with active obedience to Jesus as the strong foundation of our life, we can maintain our passion and intensity for Christ, mature spiritually, and are able to finish well.

We become spiritually lethargic when we compromise our obedience to God, choosing when and how we obey him. This disobedience may begin in minor matters, resulting in opening ourselves to major areas of sin. At the end of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew chapters 5-7), Jesus contrasts two houses in a storm (Matthew 7:24-27): one collapses and the other stands firm. Strong foundations are vital in our journey with Christ. Clearly, Jesus is the rock of our foundation. However, standing on the Rock means to actively obey His teachings, being 'doers' of the Word, not just 'hearers'. When we practice active obedience, we take His words and apply these truths in our lives. As a result, we become wise and can weather any storm we face.

The power of God's Word is its relevance and validity in every century. Jesus' words are never outdated. Though our Bible is sacred, it's not a charm that will protect us if we simply hold on to it. If we're not actually living out God's Word and applying His teachings to our lives, simply reading the Bible won't hold our interest for long. God's power is accessed through the application of His words to our lives. When we read the Bible, it isn't just about understanding what it means, but asking ourselves, through God's Holy Spirit, 'How do I obey?'. Obedience helps us understand the Bible more than any number of Bible studies, dictionaries and commentaries.

When people keep Jesus at a 'safe' distance, their foundation becomes weak. Even if they read the Bible, attend church and engage in Christian rituals, they don't stand a chance in the storms of life because they don't take God seriously. It's important to note that in the parable about the two houses, Jesus is not contrasting non-Christians with Christians; He's comparing two people who profess to be Christians. You may not be able to tell the difference by looking or speaking to them. It's deep down in their foundation. One settles for cerebral faith whereas the other's faith transforms them from the inside out. The storm and the flood in this parable could mean life's struggles, but are also a reference to God's ultimate judgement when we have to face Him and account for our lives.

Christians are not guaranteed a storm-free life, but when we obey Jesus' teachings, no storm can destroy our faith. We are firmly anchored, and the storm only increases our faith as we cling to His Word. Christ is our Foundation and obedience to Him is the key to our endurance. We should have 'spiritual check-ups' before the Lord, to ensure there is no discrepancy between what we say we believe and how we live our lives. We do this through active obedience and surrender to God's will, asking: 'Lord, what are you saying to me, and what do you want me to do about it?'



sermon study guide

IN - PURSUE RELATIONSHIP

1. What activity has been a part of your life the longest? What kept your interest in it? If it is a past activity, what caused you to give it up?
2. Who is someone in your life whose faith has stood the test of time and the trials of life? What aspect of their faith encourages you?

UP - PURSUE GOD

Read Matthew 7:24-27

3. What are the similarities and differences in this passage regarding the builders, foundations, results, etc.?
4. What are Jesus' words that He is referring to? Scan through the headings in Matthew 5-7. Why is obedience to Jesus' words likened to 'building on the rock'? What are some examples of building on sand we need to avoid?

OUT - PURSUE MISSION

5. Pastor Ashwin said that 'our foundation is the key to our endurance'. How would you describe your spiritual foundation? Shaky? Solid? Brand new? Eroding? Under repair, or other? How has a foundation of obedience aided you when storms have come up in your life?
6. What is the importance of other believers in helping you hold fast to your foundation in Christ amidst a storm? Pray for such a person(s) to be in your life. How might God be calling you to help build into another's spiritual foundation?

THE WORD (NIV)

Matthew 7:24-27

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

For Personal Reflection/Prayer:

Read James 3:13 and 2 Cor 13:5a.

Pastor Ashwin said, "A believer who is still standing strong in their faith is the one who has made obedience to Jesus as the bedrock of their life." Invite the Lord to examine your foundation – is it based merely on reading the Word, or reading and obeying? In what areas does your foundation need to be strengthened?