

Tusculum Hills Baptist Church  
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Finding Your Way Back to Jesus Series

WHEN LIFE IS GOOD

Luke 6:46-49

November 12, 2023

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Today's sermon is the third and final in a series called "Finding Your Way Back to Jesus". In the first sermon, "When Jesus Sleeps," I encouraged you not to jump ship when Jesus does not respond to a storm the way you think he should. In the second sermon, "When Faith Fails," we discussed the process of turning away from Jesus. I reminded you that Jesus loves you, and he pleads with those who have fallen away to return to a life of faith and of following him. Today's sermon is entitled "When Life is Good." This message is not so much about falling away from Jesus as it is about building a foundation so you do not fall away from him.

Let's begin by reading our primary passage of scripture.

**SCRIPTURE:** Luke 6:46-49

*"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? <sup>47</sup> As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. <sup>48</sup> They are like a man building a house, who dug down deep and laid the foundation on rock. When a flood came, the torrent struck that house but could not shake it, because it was well built. <sup>49</sup> But the one who hears my words and does not put them into practice is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. The moment the torrent struck that house, it collapsed and its destruction was complete."*

**ILLUSTRATION:** On June 29, 1995, the roof of the Sampoong Department Store in Seoul, South Korea, gave way. Air conditioning units crashed through the roof and landed on an already overloaded and weakened fifth floor. The fifth floor gave way, and the five-story building pancaked into the basement. In less than twenty seconds, all the supporting structures were gone, 502 people were dead, and another

1,500 were trapped inside. The resulting investigation of the disaster reported that, in addition to other factors, the building's poorly laid foundation on the unstable ground of a previous landfill had caused the structural failures.

**EXPLANATION:** You do not have to be in the construction business to understand the importance of a good foundation. What is true of a building is even more true when it comes to our faith. Someone once said that every person is either in a storm, just coming out of a storm, or getting ready to head into one. It may seem like a pessimistic view of life, but there is a lot of truth to it.

The story of the house built on a rock is a reminder that the best time to prepare for a storm is before you're in it. In this passage of scripture, Jesus gives us three pieces of advice on how to make sure that we have a strong foundation. (Luke 6:47)

- Come to Jesus.
- Hear his words.
- Put them into practice.

## 1-COME TO JESUS

**EXPLANATION:** The first step in laying a solid foundation for our faith is to answer the call to come to Jesus. Make no mistake, Jesus calls every person to a relationship with him, but the decision to follow Christ is not simply an acknowledgment of who he is.

James 2:19 says, *“You believe that there is one God. Good! Even the demons believe that—and shudder.”*

Saving belief is more than a head knowledge of or a simple assent to the deity of Christ. Saving belief is a submission to Christ's lordship in your life. When you understand that Jesus has complete authority, you will understand that he has the right to do or not do whatever he sees fit. He is God, and we are not.

Let's look at relationships in general.

- You meet someone and you become acquaintances. You are polite, friendly, but don't make plans to spend time together. There is no sense of

commitment. Basically, you meet in passing or because of some type of situation that brings you together. In life, you'll have lots of acquaintances who come and go.

- In time, if the relationship grows, you become casual friends. You have a shared interest or hobby. You meet from time to time.
- In time, if the relationship grows, you become close friends. Close friends enjoy each other's company, make plans to see each other, talk about their lives, ask each other for advice, are always glad to see each other, and refrain from judgment.
- And in time, if the relationship grows, you become intimate friends. Intimate friends are very close, can talk about any topic, and each person shares a strong sense of security and fulfillment in the relationship.

I believe that one reason people fall away from Jesus is because they never went beyond the acquaintance or casual friend phase.

How about you? What phase are you in with Jesus? He wants you to be in an intimate relationship with him. And when times are good, he wants to share those times with you. Let's not use Jesus solely as a 9-1-1 call.

**ILLUSTRATION:** An international friend of mine in seminary said something I'll never forget. When times are good, continue praying and build a reservoir of prayer that you can pull from when times are not good.

In this series about finding your way back to Jesus, I believe many fall away because their spiritual foundation in him is not solid. Please consider that.

The first step in building a foundation of faith that can withstand the storms is to

- Come to Jesus.

## **2-HEAR HIS WORDS**

One of the reasons Christians struggle with their faith is that God does not answer their prayers in the way that they think he should.

- A loved one grows ill, and you pray for healing, but healing does not come. “Where was God?” you ask. You know he could have healed, but he did not.
- Someone takes advantage of you or mistreats you, and no one comes to your aid. “Where was God?” you ask. He could have brought justice, but he did not.
- Despite your best efforts, your business fails, or your education goes south. “Where was God?” you ask. He did not help you when you needed him most.

**ILLUSTRATION:** You are not the first person to be disappointed with God. Mary and Martha were extremely disappointed with Jesus. He was their close friend. They watched him heal people, yet when their brother Lazarus grew ill, he did not come. He did not heal. In fact, he intentionally waited until he knew that Lazarus had died before he intervened.

**APPLICATION:** When God does not answer our prayers the way we want or think he should, it’s devastating. For many people, it breaks their already fragile faith. Jesus spoke about this kind of faith in the parable of the Sower, which I mentioned last week. He said that the troubles, persecutions, and worries choked the life out of those who had at one time welcomed the good news of the gospel.

That’s why it is so important to be rooted in the truth. Most of the time, when we face hardships and question our faith, we are actually questioning God’s ability or his love. Either we think that God did not answer our prayers the way we wanted because he could not, or we think that he did not answer our prayers the way we wanted because he just does not care.

Like spoiled children, we try to formulate reasons why we did not get our way. However, when we train ourselves to listen to God’s word, to really know and believe what he says, then we will know that God is all-powerful and loving but he is also wise. His ways are not our ways, but his ways are always best. That’s a hard pill for some people to swallow, but that is truth.

When we come to him in submission to his authority and when we hear what he has to say, then when hard times come, we can remind ourselves of the truth according to God’s word and not the truth according to our circumstances or what we feel.

To build a strong foundation, we must

- Come to Jesus.
- Hear his words.... and

### 3-PUT THEM INTO PRACTICE

**EXPLANATION:** Jesus told a story about two brothers. Their father told them to do something. The first said that he would not, but he changed his mind and obeyed. The second said he would but did not. Jesus asked the followers which one was obedient? Of course, the answer was the first brother. Although he had initially been resistant to the idea, he eventually did obey. Obedience is the third step to laying a firm foundation.

James 1:22 says, *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”*

Our acts of obedience do not save us, but they are vitally important in strengthening our faith.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Athletes understand this. They know the importance of training their minds and their bodies to perform well under pressure. They do this with lots and lots of practice. Some athletes even practice in their minds, going through routines and plans mentally as well as physically, visualizing success.

**APPLICATION:** In the same way, Christians can prepare themselves for trials by obeying God’s word during the good seasons. It is easier to respond appropriately when under pressure if you have learned how to respond appropriately when you are not.

1 Timothy 4:7-8 says, *“Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives’ tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. <sup>8</sup> For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.”*

A strong foundation of faith requires that we

- Come to Jesus.
- Hear his words.
- Put them into practice.

**APPLICATION:** Make no mistake. Storms will come. None of us go through this life unscathed. Our world is a mess, because we as humans have made it so. From the beginning, when sin entered into this world, every living thing was affected. Because of sin, we have a broken world filled with broken people, and until Christ comes again and makes all things new, that's the way it will be.

Our faith does not guarantee that we will not suffer, but our faith does guarantee that we will not suffer alone.

- Like the disciples in the boat on that stormy night so long ago, Jesus is with us in the storms, and he alone has the power to see us through to the other side.
- Like Peter when he failed, Jesus pleads with us to return to him when our faith falters. He loves us and wants us to love and follow him.
- Like the builders who support their structures with a strong foundation, Jesus reminds us to prepare for the storms of this life by sticking close to him and obeying his word.

Isaiah 26:4 says, “*Trust in the LORD forever, for the LORD, the LORD himself, is the Rock eternal.*” If you do not want your faith to fail, build a strong foundation on the Rock that is Jesus.

*The wise man built his house upon the rock.*

*The wise man built his house upon the rock.*

*The wise man built his house upon the rock and the rains came tumbling down.*

*The rains came down and the floods came up.*

*The rains came down and the floods came up.*

*The rains came down and the floods came up.*

*But the house on the rock stood firm.*

A friend of mine shared with me how long ago she quit saying platitudes like “have faith and keep praying” or “just trust God”. Surely those phrases are true and might be relevant at the right time. However, it’s best to be very careful interjecting such statements when all is well with you but not with someone who is suffering. My friend went on to say, “The key is figuring out how to live a faithful, joyful, and effective spiritual life when everything around you seems to be falling apart.” I believe part of that key is being faithful when times are good.

**ILLUSTRATION:** Since yesterday was Veterans Day, I thought of a friend of mine who has gone on to be with the Lord. He was a ball turret gunner in WW2 and his plane was shot down by the Nazis over Greece. He knew he was over Greece because he had looked at his Bible maps so many times while growing up. As the plane was tumbling downward, and the crew members were struggling, a parachute seemed to come out of nowhere and hit this guy in the chest. He strapped it on and was able to escape the plane before it crashed into a ball of flames. There was one thing that crossed his mind. As he went downward with that parachute strapped on, knowing that he would likely be held as a prisoner of war, he told me the thought hit him that he was saved. Of all the things that could have been on his mind, the thought that hit him so strongly was that Jesus was with him. He was held by the Nazis for sixteen months. Most of that time he ate raw potatoes. Eventually, he was liberated. The whole time he was a prisoner of war, he had the full confidence that Jesus was with him. Wow! That is so powerful. But I believe there is a greater truth in his story. His spiritual foundation in Jesus was strong, growing, and secure well before that plane was shot down.

**INVITATION:** Where are you in your walk of faith? If you are in the storm, please remember that Jesus is there with you. If your faith has failed, please heed Jesus’s plea to return to him. If today, nothing is wrong and life is good, then remember to fill your heart and life with God’s word and follow his commands so that you will be prepared when the storms of life come your way. And if, by some chance, you have never taken that first step, then by all means, do not put it off. Jesus is calling.

The altar is open if you want to come forward. I’d be happy to pray with you and share more about how you can submit your life to Christ.

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I use the NIV translation of scripture because of its conversational nature. Feel free to go to Bible Gateway and copy and paste whichever translation you want to use. This transcript has been edited to an outline format that improves readability and therefore may not exactly follow the video edition.

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