

2020 Vision (Substance-Authenticity-Mission)

Who would have ever thought we would make it to 2020? I still remember the world ending in 2000, or at least that is what we were told. **Confession time, who has already written a check this year and dated it 2019?** We rarely use checks anymore at the Burnham house, only 2 per month, but I stopped myself after I wrote 2-0-1/2-0. The New Year is a great time to pause, reflect, and look forward to what is next.

Let's put Jan 1, 2020 in perspective.

When WWI started the Civil War felt as far away to Americans as WW2 feels to us now.

If the Wonder Years were filmed today it would cover the years 2000-2005.

Remember when Jurassic Park, Lion King, and Forrest Gump appeared in theatres? Closer to the moon landing than today.

If you're 60 or older, you were born closer to the 1800's than today.

35+? You were born closer to the 1940's than today.

Talk about perspective. Why is this important? Because many never thought this day would arrive. But Yahweh, in His sovereignty, has graciously and patiently given you another day and year to make a difference in the world. Let's take time to reflect and renew our urgency for the Kingdom today.

I believe it is time for the people of God to live in mission for the glory of God. Our mission: Bethel exists, to bring the whole gospel to the whole person and to the whole world. **2020 Vision: to conquer St. Clair County for Christ one gospel conversation at a time.**

But How? **Let us focus on three words in 2020: Substance, Authenticity, and Purpose.**

Today's message is entitled, "2020: Built upon the Rock." Matthew 7:24-27

Prayer

As only Jesus can do, the Savior masterfully paints a visual picture to demonstrate kingdom principles. Jesus compares hearing and doing the Word to a building project.

What you might not know is that Jesus of Nazareth apprenticed under his father Joseph who was a master artisan and builder. In ancient times, it was expected

that a son naturally acquires the skills and occupation of his dad. So, the master builder, Jesus, would have known the wise person living in the Palestinian desert would erect a dwelling on a secure rock to protect the house from the flash floods that sudden storms created.

The Messiah would have equally known the foolish person would build directly on the sand and would have no protection against the devastation of the elements. And it is even possible that Jesus and those in his hearing had experience both edifices in their communities.

Why would Jesus give you a lesson on house projects?

God wants you to have solid foundations (7:24). Jesus would never give us this word if He wanted you to fail. Rather, the Holy One always desires what is for **His glory and your good**. Never think that God is against you. If Jesus is asking you to do anything, it is for your best, it is for your eternal protection. What is good for you? Look to His Word.

What is the Lord's plan for you in 2020? That you build upon the rock. As I mediated on this teaching of the Messiah, the one word that has occurred over and over in my prayers is the theme of substance.

We live in the times of "filters" and "slogans." We are more connected than ever and yet isolated. We have access to food like never before, but many of us eat empty calories. Yahweh wants you to have substance not sand. I believe, more than ever before, Yahweh wants you to have a sure foundation in 2020. He desires His church to have a solid footing this year. And when we grow individually, we grow stronger corporately.

If true, then how to you build?

Substance is found in hearing and doing the Word of Jesus (7:24).

The word "hear" is used twice in this passage. When Jesus uses a word twice, pay attention. *It's like a parent calling your name again. Joshua? But when I heard Joshua Neal Burnham, I paid attention. The word hear (Akouw) our word for acoustic, can mean hear, receive news, understand, do, to recover one's hearing.* In actuality, Jesus said whoever understands and receives these words of mine and acts on them ...

The rabbis debated whether hearing or doing the law was more important; most concluded that hearing it was more important, because one could not do it without hearing it. But they did insist that both were necessary. Jesus says yes, hearing is understanding + doing His words. *I do not pretend to have everything figured out, but what would my life look like in 2020 if I purposed to live out what I do understand. Love God + love others.*

We have lost the art of doing and acting. I believe that Jesus would look at my life inactivity and assure me that I have not heard His words. We

can never divorce **faith from following**. This is what Bonhoeffer would call this **Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate**. Never build your life upon religious sand. Let's get back to doing. What if we all prayed every day Jesus help me hear you and do what you say. Substance is found in hearing + acting.

I think Jesus wants us to also avoid acting without hearing. Self-righteous behavior is when I elevate my preferences, traditions, or intuitions over the word of Messiah. This is equally folly and is religious sand-castle building. Will you build in substance this year? **Substance is found in hearing and doing the Word of Jesus (7:24).**

How?

Wise lives are built upon the Rock (7:24). What rock? Listen to how Peter describes the Rock.

Matt. 16:15 "But you," he asked them, "who do you say that I am?" **Matt. 16:16** Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." **Matt. 16:17** Jesus responded, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, because flesh and blood did not reveal this to you, but my Father in heaven. **18** And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it.

The rock is Jesus Christ. The only one who was worthy to open the scroll. The only one who lived a sinless life, died upon the cross, and rose again. The only one who offered up His life to purchase eternal life and abundant life to all who follow Him. Have you confessed Jesus as Lord? Can you sing, "O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer or on Christ the solid rock I stand?" ***What is your answer, "who do you say I am?"***

Jesus did not give his skeptics much room to maneuver in their opinion of who he was—he was either everything he says he was (My words) ... or he was nothing at all. Are you ready to fully give your life to Jesus today and walk in faithful right relationship? This only happens when the Father through His spirit gives you ears to hear.

Wise lives continually build upon the rock (7:24) The picture is not of two men deliberately selecting foundations, but it contrasts one who carefully chooses and prepares his foundation with one who builds at hap-hazard. Don't lay the foundation and walk away. Both "keep on hearing" the words of Jesus, however the first man continually builds upon the heard word. **You see it is not enough to know about the rock. A solid foundation combines authentic commitment to Christ with persevering obedience.**

I learned this lesson the hard way recently. My house is literally build upon a rocky ridge. It is on such a sure foundation that it's hard to grow grass because of the extensive rocky soil. However, throughout the years our front step has showed signs of fatigue. In the last 10 years it has dropped two inches. So I called in the experts. When

the foundation expert arrived he asked me to come outside and watch as he took a rubber mallet and began to pound on the sidewalk. To my surprise, we began to hear voids underneath the concrete. Voids are places of developing emptiness due to the rain, erosion, and environment.

Why do I share this story? Both the wise man and the foolish man experienced harsh environments. Rains fell, floods came, and winds blew. The harshness of our broken world happens to us all. And the Christian message is that one day Jesus will make all things right and new! **This is why we must preach the gospel to ourselves daily.** We have a vision to conquer St. Clair County for Christ, one gospel conversation at a time. But, I am desperately in need of hearing the Gospel daily. You will never share the gospel with others if you are not rehearsing it personally.

What did I learn about my foundation? **I am often blind to voids in my life. Although our house is built upon the rock, there are still areas which have sand.** But, with a special hammer you can hear them. And guess what? Voids are fixable.

Jer. 23:29 "Is not my word like fire"—this is the LORD's declaration—"and like a hammer that pulverizes rock?"

How will Jesus conquer St. Clair County? One gospel conversation at a time. And that conversation begins with my heart every day. The Gospel has a way of finding and filling voids underneath my surface. What cracks does the master builder need to fill today?

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Application (Head, Heart, Hands)

1. Have you built your life upon the Rock? Do you need for the first time to say yes and follow Jesus Christ? What would your actions say about your hearing?
2. Will you let the Holy Spirit search your heart to find and fill cracks? The Gospel message is like a hammer, finding the soft spots.
3. What are you doing to build upon the rock? What would it look like if you asked every day what is my only hope? That I am not my own but belong to God.
4. How are you removing sand castle building? Jesus doesn't want your life to collapse.
5. Who is one person you can commit to pray for that needs Jesus, the Rock?
6. Who is one person you can encourage to keep going? What if they were on the brink of collapse?

. 27 The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. It collapsed with a great crash."

In 2020, may we commit our lives like never before to keep building on Jesus the rock and redeemer

Notes

Substance =the quality of being important, valid, or significant:

Heb. 11:1 Now faith is the reality of what is hoped for, the proof of what is not seen. **2** For by it our ancestors won God's approval.**Heb. 11:3** By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible.**Heb. 11:4** By faith Abel offered to God a better sacrifice than Cain did. By faith he was approved as a righteous man, because God approved his gifts, and even though he is dead, he still speaks through his faith.

Heb. 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

- Hebrews 11:1 does not necessarily define faith as give us some of its characteristics
 -
- "Substance"
 - the word hypostasis, translated by the NIV as a participle is in fact a noun, which has used variously to communicate the idea of substance, firmness, confidence, a collection of documents establishing ownership or proof.
 - Could translate "Now Faith is the resolute confidence"
 - Shows that Faith gives the "basis" for our calculations and our triumphal life in Jesus Christ.
- "Evidence"
 - word elenchus is not a static emotion but something lively and active, not just a state of immovable dogmatism but a vital certainty which impels the believer to stretch out his hand.
- "Hoped"
 - hope as used often in the NT refers not to something we would like to have or see, a kind of personal wish, but rather, to something like "confident expression" (EBS)

Matt. 7:24 "Therefore, everyone who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. **25** The rain fell, the rivers rose, and the winds blew and pounded that house. Yet it didn't collapse, because its foundation was on the rock.

The wise person living in the Palestinian desert would erect a dwelling on a secure rock to protect the house from the flash floods that sudden storms created. The foolish person would

build directly on the sand and would have no protection against the devastation of the elements. So too Judgment Day will come like a flood to disclose which spiritual

HNTC 7:24–27. In this third and final challenge to choose between life and destruction, Jesus made it even clearer that the criterion for a righteous life is obedience to Jesus' teaching. His righteousness was diametrically opposed to **pharisaical self-righteous works**. Note **these words of mine** (7:24, 26). **The possessive pronoun mine is in the emphatic beginning position in that phrase.** Jesus was equating his own words with the will of his Father (7:21). Jesus was claiming to have the same authority as the God who authored the Old Testament Scriptures—a claim he also implied in clarifying the original intent of the law in 5:17–48.

Jesus did not leave it to the crowd to perceive his authority (7:28–29). He claimed it openly. This is quite an audacious claim, unless he actually had the authority to make it. **Jesus did not give his skeptics much room to maneuver in their opinion of who he was—he was either everything he says he was ... or he was nothing at all.** He must be fully accepted or fully rejected, for no “good moral teacher” would say the astonishing things Jesus did unless they were true. Jesus is God's Son.

Therefore in 7:24 refers to the preceding clarification (7:13–23), which justifies the generalizations Jesus made in 7:24–27. Anyone who knows of the coming judgment (7:21–23) but ignores Jesus' teaching is as foolish as a person who builds a house on sand.

The people represented by the two builders share one similarity and one difference. Both “keep on hearing” the words of Jesus. The present tense may imply that both hearers had been exposed to his teachings. In any case, both hearers were now accountable to obey what they had heard. However, the first person “keeps on doing” what Jesus taught, while the second “keeps on *not* doing” what Jesus taught.

The first man was wise; the second man was foolish. The first man found stability and blessing in this life and in eternity; the second experienced calamity in this life and in eternity (the rain, floods, and winds can represent both hardships in this life and God's final judgment).

Notice that wisdom (**the rock**) means to put the words of Jesus into practice.

I will liken

I will liken him, etc. The picture is not of two men deliberately selecting foundations, **but it contrasts one who carefully chooses and prepares his foundation with one who builds at hazard.** This is more strongly brought out by Luke (6:48): “Who digged and went deep, and laid a foundation upon the rock” (Rev.). Kitto (“Pictorial Bible”) says: “At this very day the mode of building in Christ's own town of Nazareth suggests the source of this image. Dr. Robinson was entertained in the house of a Greek Arab. The house had just been built, and was not yet finished. In order to lay the foundations he had dug down to the solid rock, as is usual throughout the country here, to the depth of thirty feet, and then built up arches.” The abrupt

style of ver. 25 pictures the sudden coming of the storm which sweeps away the house on the sand: “Descended the rain, and came the floods, and blew the winds.”

26 But everyone who hears these words of mine and doesn't act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand. **27** The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. It collapsed with a great crash.”

7:24–27. The rabbis debated whether hearing or doing the law was more important; most concluded that hearing it was more important, because one could not do it without hearing it. But they did insist that both were necessary.

Again the image is of the day of judgment. The idea of ultimately being judged for hearing but not obeying was familiar (Ezek 33:32–33). But no Jewish teacher apart from Jesus claimed so much authority for his own words; such authority was reserved for the law itself. Some of Jesus' more biblically literate hearers may have thought of Proverbs 24:3 (“by wisdom a house is built”) and the contrast between wisdom (which builds a house in 9:1) and folly in Proverbs 9:1–18.

It is not enough simply to hear Jesus' call or even to respond with some temporary flurry of good deeds. Rather, we must build a solid foundation that combines authentic commitment to Christ with persevering obedience. Jesus graphically illustrates his point with a parable (on which see comments under chap. 13). **structures will endure.** Preliminary crises may also reveal authentic and inauthentic spirituality. In fact, often only in times of crisis can one's faith be truly proven. This parable concludes Jesus' “two ways” discussion and forms a fitting conclusion to the sermon as a whole by making plain that there is no valid reason for refusing Christ's appeal. As R. T. France states succinctly, “The teaching of the Sermon on the Mount is not meant to be admired but to be obeyed

The word hear “Akouw” is used twice in this passage and can mean hear, receive news, understand, or to recover one's hearing

Illustrations

In April 2016, *Harper's Magazine* published a fascinating report about a man named Jay Miscovich, who found what he claimed were hundreds of emeralds from a Spanish shipwreck that went down in 1622. The Florida Keys have long been a hunting ground for sunken treasure. So many vessels were wrecked among the islands and reefs, loaded as they were with billions of dollars' worth of gold, silver, and jewels being shipped in countless Spanish armadas as they sailed from South America to Spain, that they still attract hundreds of seekers after true treasure. Jay's samples and claims that he'd found masses of emeralds that were still out there were estimated to be worth a half billion dollars.

With the advice of a partner, lawyers, and jewel experts, millions of investment dollars were collected from private individuals, wall street managers, and a company specifically set up to protect this enormous find. The article paints Jay as a sympathetic character. He is likeable in ways that make you end up rooting for him. Most of those who contributed to his project were individuals or companies who only cared about what monetary value could be gained from owning or selling the priceless jewels for themselves.

In the end, the world discovered that Jay Miscovich's entire story was manufactured. He made it all up, including deliberately "seeding" the ocean floor with emeralds he'd bought on the market. Exactly as he hoped, his false claims drew the interest of treasure hunters. But down the road as unaccountable discrepancies surfaced, such as the Belgian jewelers finding an epoxy resin on the surface of the emeralds that could only have been added in modern times, and as one by one the investors pulled out, the entire story unraveled. Along with investigations came lawsuits, loss of friendships and family, and a poisonous atmosphere of distrust and anger.