
Standing on Rock or Sinking in Sand

Various Passages

*W*e live in a world that constantly is shaking under us. People want stability and no matter where they turn they can't find it. For me, it was back in '89 in San Francisco. When I moved from the Bay Area to here in '87, I still served on the board of a financial institution and was attending a board meeting in the City, just in time for the Loma Prieta Earthquake. Born in San Francisco, I'd grown up with earthquakes, so initially it was no big deal until I found out how bad it was. And so many of us suffered from some degree of PTSD. No security here.

People strive to find stability, but it seems as if everything is against us. Just living in the US in and of itself should mean we're safe. But "nature" argues against this. There was Hurricane Sandy and Katrina, West Nile Virus, the '08 floods in Iowa, droughts, tornados, etc. No security here.

Then there is people-generated chaos; the Kennedy assassinations, Charley Manson, the Zodiac killer, 9/11, the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, the Boston Marathon explosions, etc. No security here.

For five years we have been in the midst of the economic turmoil. People put their trust in their investments, bank accounts, homes. The financial markets collapsed, the housing markets collapsed, the job market collapsed, unemployment ran out, etc. No security here.

Oh, but wait: our government will look out for us! But we hear that NSA spies on citizens, the IRS targets specific groups, the new part of the Bay Bridge may be unsafe, Northern California may be subject to environmental damage we don't yet fully understand as major amounts of water are shifted south, etc. No security here.

And it doesn't matter how well you build. The smart little pig built his house of brick, but because the housing market fell he found himself upside down. The wolf, unbeknownst to the pig, purchased his mortgage. When the smart little pig couldn't make the payments, the wolf foreclosed, evicted the pigs and then was able to have a nice dinner of roast pork. No security here.

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“Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on the rock. 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. 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. The rain fell, the rivers rose, the winds blew and pounded that house, and it collapsed. And its collapse was great!” (Matthew 7:24–27 HCSB).

A. Introduction: That was depressing. But this isn’t our world, it’s the world’s world. And that’s the good news! The fact of the matter is, there is real security in an insecure world. And there is only one source for true and lasting security.

Real security comes from a relationship with God. And, as we’ll see this morning, this is the security we have to offer to the residents of this insecure world. The only way to find peace and security in this world, to not be tossed to and fro by its chaos, is to receive it through the shed blood of Christ.

But first, we have a question to ask ourselves. We may have built our house on rock, but do we live in that reality? Or, do we live as practical atheists? And how can we share true security with others if we’re not living it ourselves? We can’t teach what we don’t live.

So, first I want to remind ourselves of what we know: first, the source of our security and second, what that means from a practical standpoint. How do we live in the reality of our security in Christ?

Next we’ll consider why, as the world grows more insecure, it is an outstanding time to present the opportunity of finding real security to the lost.

Finally, we’ll make the distinction between giving out the Gospel and making disciples. And yes, this is the difference between building on rock and living in the structure we’ve built.

B. For the Saint: 1. The Fact of Our Security: There are numerous aspects to our security. These are all grounded in the Cross, our salvation, and the fact we now are at peace with God. First we are secure in our salvation, both now and in eternity.

We know this is the case because our salvation isn’t based on who we are but who Christ is. Salvation isn’t earned, it is gifted. This that is the primary message we have to bring to the lost. Paul explains the basis of salvation and that resultant security when he stated:

“If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. One believes with the heart, resulting in righteousness, and one confesses with the mouth, resulting in salvation. Now the Scripture says, Everyone who believes on Him will not be put to shame,”

“But now, apart from the law, God’s righteousness has been revealed—attested by the Law and the Prophets—that is, God’s righteousness through faith in Jesus

Christ, to all who believe, since there is no distinction. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. They are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. God presented Him as a propitiation through faith in His blood, to demonstrate His righteousness, because in His restraint God passed over the sins previously committed. God presented Him to demonstrate His righteousness at the present time, so that He would be righteous and declare righteous the one who has faith in Jesus” (Romans 10:9–11, 3:21–26 HCSB).

And having accepted Christ, we can be sure that we can't lose our salvation and as an absolute fact we will go home to be with the Lord. We can do nothing on our own to be saved nor to keep our salvation. Why?—because it isn't dependent on us. It is dependent on God, or as Jesus states:

“I give them eternal life, and they will never perish—ever! No one will snatch them out of My hand” (John 10:28 HCSB).

Jesus gives eternal life, not five-year life, not fifty-year life, not depending on how badly we mess up, but eternal life because all our sins have been paid for... including those we haven't committed yet.

“And when you were dead in trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive with Him and forgave us all our trespasses” (Colossians 2:13 HCSB).

2. How Are We Living?: So, we are secure in our justification and glorification, that is, the past and future tenses of salvation. But what about our security in the present tense, sanctification? This brings us to the question: what do we mean by security anyway?

The world defines security most specifically as it relates to our freedom for attack from enemies both inside and outside the nation. That hasn't worked out too well.

But in the broader sense, security refers to the desire to live a comfortable life, free from difficulties, whether health-related, economic, circumstantial, etc. We know by now that this desire is seldom, if ever, fulfilled.

How should we, as believers, define security? First, as we've noted we are saved and nothing we do can lead to the loss of salvation. Second, God will be there with us and continue His work in us. Security isn't about our circumstances, it is about walking in the certainty of having a life built upon the rock, walking with the Lord and remembering that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit walk with us.

“But whoever listens to me will live securely and be free from the fear of danger” (Proverbs 1:33 HCSB). — The Father

“In a little while the world will see Me no longer, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live too. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, you are in Me, and I am in you” (John 14:19–20 HCSB). — The Son

“If you love Me, you will keep My commands. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever. He is the Spirit of truth. The world is unable to receive Him because it doesn’t see Him or know Him. But you do know Him, because He remains with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you” (John 14:15–18 HCSB). — The Spirit

“I am sure of this, that He who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:6 HCSB). — As Paul says ...

So if we understand that our security is tied to our relationship and fellowship with God, then we can understand two things. First, absolutely nothing can undermine that relationship ...

“... in all these things we are more than victorious through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that not even death or life, angels or rulers, things present or things to come, hostile powers, height or depth, or any other created thing will have the power to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord!” (Romans 8:37–39 HCSB).

... and only we can undermine our fellowship.

“But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. Because if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man looking at his own face in a mirror” (James 1:22–23 HCSB).

But even here our security isn’t in not making mistakes, but in our dependency on God.

“If we say, “We have no sin,” we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:8–9 HCSB).

There is only one question left. In dependency on the Spirit, are we going to live on a day-to-day basis based on these truths? We need to know these truths not just theoretical but practical. We need to remind ourselves that the world’s view of security is foolishness. And consequently, knowing that the source of true security is grounded in the Cross. Then, as we continue to trust the Lord to provide for us in all circumstances, we can experience the peace the “world doesn’t know.”

“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but it is God’s power to us who are being saved. For it is written: I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and I will set aside the understanding of the experts.

Where is the philosopher? Where is the scholar? Where is the debater of this age? Hasn’t God made the world’s wisdom foolish? For since, in God’s wisdom, the world did not know God through wisdom, God was pleased to save those who believe through the foolishness of the message preached. For the Jews ask for signs and the Greeks seek wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to the Jews and foolishness to the Gentiles. Yet to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ is God’s power and God’s wisdom, because God’s foolishness is wiser than human wisdom” (1 Corinthians 1:18–25 HCSB).

“God clothes the grass, which is in the field today and is thrown into the furnace tomorrow, how much more will He do for you—you of little faith?”...“Don’t worry about anything, but in everything, through prayer and petition with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses every thought, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus” (Luke 12:28; Philippians 4:6–7 HCSB).

C. For the Sinner: 1. Checking the Foundation for Sand: As we grow in Christ we will, at least at times, experience the reality of His security. This in turn brings us to the second issue of consideration: offering the opportunity of this security to the lost.

One blessing that comes from living in the midst of chaos is that generally most people recognize life is chaotic. While their solutions are reflections of the foolishness of the world, in dependence on the Holy Spirit we can show them that their house is built on sinking sand.

Even those who are dealt with the instability of life on some sort of “spiritual” basis still have built on sand. Actually, that’s the specific intent of Jesus’ parable. The religious establishment of Jesus’ day was committed to its own view of God rather than being committed to serving Him on His terms, that is, as followers of Christ.

Opportunities will always come our way, if we are open to them. People share their fears, concerns, anxieties, etc. And we can honestly say, “Yes, that is scary.” But as for me, my security isn’t in (fill in the blank), it is in Christ. We can talk about what the Lord is doing in our lives, and if the Spirit opens the door, we can then talk to them about their need of a Savior, and what they need to be saved from: the consequences of their sin...

“For all [including us] have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23 HCSB).

2. Building a New Foundation on Rock: But what is important to remember is, we aren’t called to go out and get people saved, (aside from the issue that it is the Holy Spirit who saves). We are called to go out and make disciples.

This certainly means that first, an individual is to be saved. But our primary concern is that we are to minister to one another, whether we are new or long-time believers. We are to encourage one another to grow in the Lord and to mature in our walk as believers.

“And He [Jesus] personally gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the training of the saints in the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son, growing into a mature man with a stature measured by Christ’s fullness. Then we will no longer be little children, tossed by the waves and blown around by every wind of teaching, by human cunning with cleverness in the techniques of deceit. But speaking the truth in love, let us grow in every way into Him who is the head—Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-15 HCSB).

Conclusion: And this is the bottom line. As we grow individually and as a body, being taught by those whom God provides for us, we will see individuals receiving God's gift of salvation. Then we will see them and us growing spiritually. As we continue to mature and are evermore conforming to the image of Christ, we will experience His supernatural peace and true security in an insecure world, as we live on the solid rock.

“ Therefore, everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them will be like a sensible man who built his house on the rock. 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” (Matthew 7:24–25 HCSB)

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A. Introduction:

(Matthew 7:24–27)

B. For the Saint:

1. The Fact of Our Security:

(Romans 10:9–11, 3:21–26; John 10:28; Colossians 2:13)

2. How Are We Living?:

(Proverbs 1:33; John 14:19–20, 14:15–18; Philipians 1:6; Romans 8:37–39; James 1:22–23; 1 John 1:8–9; 1 Corinthians 1:18–25; Luke 12:28; Philipians 4:6–7)

C. For the Sinner:

1. Checking the Foundation for Sand:

(Romans 3:23)

2. Building a New Foundation on Rock:

(Ephesians 4:11-15)

Conclusion:

(Matthew 7:24-25)